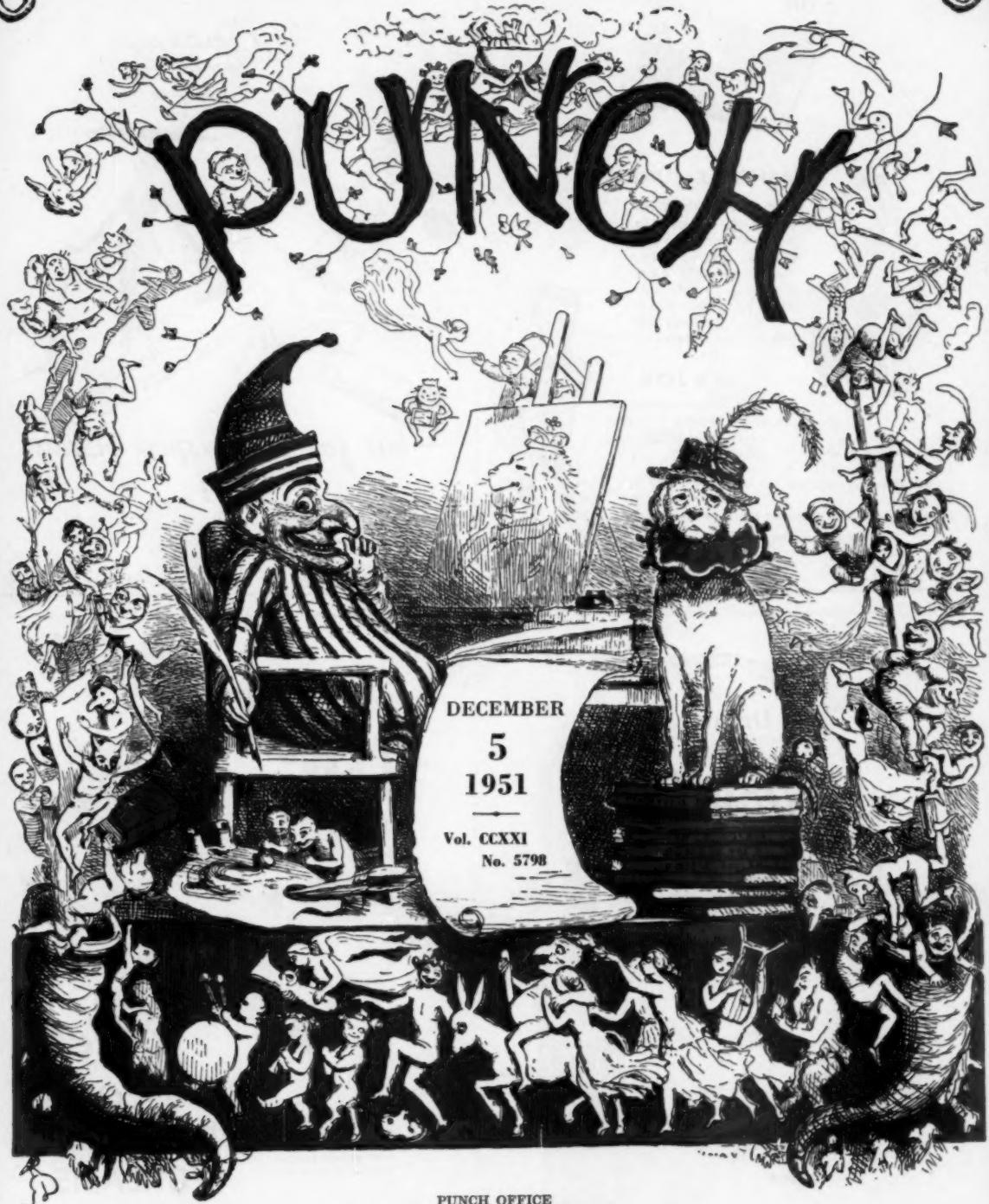


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Miniature of the Win-dak Golf Blouse—in fact, just like Dad's and Mum's. Zipped front, elastic waist, rain repellent, windproof. Made in Popuda which may be washed and still remain weatherproof.

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Does he like elegance? Pure Irish linen initialled handkerchiefs in boxes of 6. £2. 5. 0



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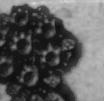
Sapphire and diamond cluster £395



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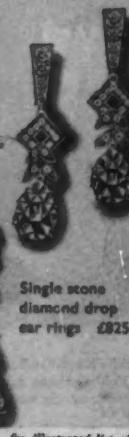
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Christmas gift wrapping service. Post orders invited.

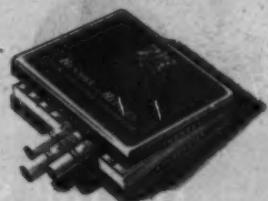
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Actual length of cigar
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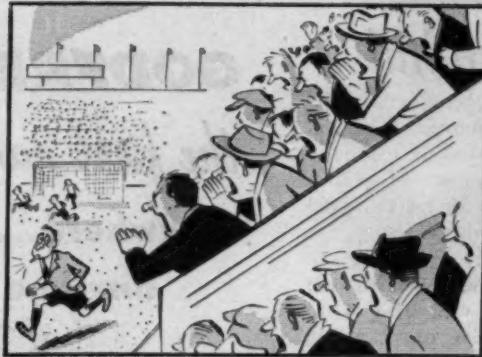
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Hoarse? go suck a



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TOBACCO**

is a mixture of abiding merit especially prepared for those who seldom lay down their pipes. No fewer than seven Virginian and Oriental tobaccos each add their quota of mellowness, of aromas and of piquancy towards a final synthesis of undiminished satisfaction. And the palate of the most constant smoker remains undulled. Like all Rattray tobaccos, 7 Reserve is skilfully prepared by hand in the manner of yesteryear. So many of our friends are won in their praises:

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Established 1899.

PAGE 4



Month in month out we take
a lot of trouble with these advertisements
spelling Accles and Pollock's name rightly or wrongly
we have come to the conclusion you people just don't care

how you spell trouble started with the Directors

who are only human on Monday

they faced us with a complaint from the
postmaster about a letter addressed to

Messrs Mackerel & Pollack
ordering some tubular steel fishing
rods following a week's delay in the post
this raised quite a stink in the place but now

drifting back to you we want to ask you to

digest all this thoroughly so that things

can swim along nicely in steel tubes as

Accles and Pollock again with nobody

getting too fresh and no more funny business with names

NOT SHACKLES & WEDLOCK

NOT KNUCKLES & HADDOCK



"Have you a trumpet handy?" is the title of
a book published by Accles & Pollock
which will be sent to anybody who
is seriously anxious to have
help through tubes.





*'This lovely divan
was £49—I bought
the headboard separately
to match my curtains'*

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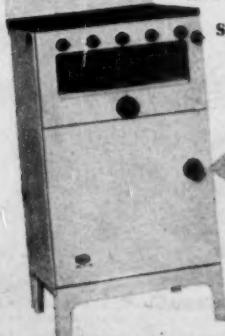
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is the time
and trouble it
saves you!



GAS COOKERS

Insist on *Chunle Quality*
TRADE MARK



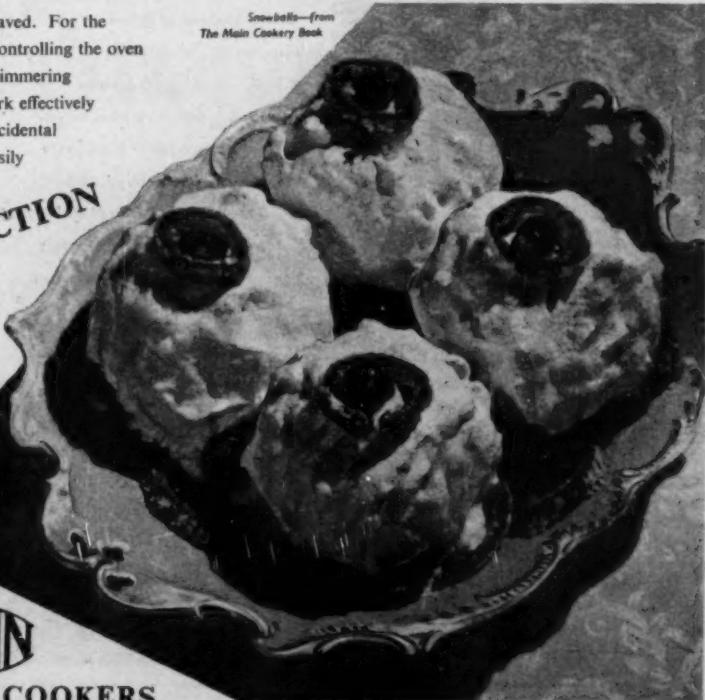
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Snowballs—from
The Main Cookery Book





YOUR BEDROOM SHOULD BE ELOQUENT OF *Elegance*

SEE HOW THE EFFECT in this picture is achieved by the Vantona Court Bedcover with the matching curtain made from an extra bedcover. Their graceful design is woven into a strong, colour-fast fabric—and there is a wide choice of designs to suit every bedroom scheme, each in Pacific blue, Lime green, Coral pink or Honey. £6.0.0 for size 70" x 100" to £10.15.0 for size 90" x 108".

The Vantona Household Advice Bureau has a brochure with details of bedroom schemes like the one shown here. Write for your copy (free) to Dept. 9, Vantona Household Advice Bureau, Vantona House, 107, Portland St., Manchester 1.



174/571
A simple theme
based on the classical
Greek honeysuckle
convention.



"I've 2,000 excuses
for being late!"

"Well, that's a new one anyway, darling."

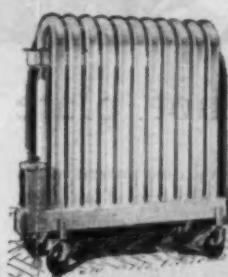
"I'll ignore that remark. I've just been to Hunt & Winterbotham, and couldn't tear myself away! There I was, surrounded by beautiful woollen cloth in 2,000 exquisite patterns . . . from sturdy tweeds to delicate worsteds—and on sale by the yard! Imagine, I, a weak woman . . ."

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There's a special art about being a Briton. To do it well, you have to know how to live in these islands and survive the cold, damp winter. Our three gentlemen have found the answer. They sport Braemar underwear.

The first gentleman hails from the City. He knows that Braemar, though expensive, is a sound investment. It lasts a lifetime. His tailor, incidentally, advises Braemar, as it fits neatly beneath his suits. The second gentleman has spent most of his life in warmer climates and wears Braemar to keep alive in winter. His doctor tells him that Braemar is the best thing for his joints. The third gentleman likes the flight of a bird and the rise of a trout. He has found that only Braemar underwear

INNES, HENDERSON AND COMPANY LTD., HAWICK, SCOTLAND

keeps him warm when the north wind blows. Their strategic 2-ply reinforcement where it really counts means real comfort and long wear.

Braemar, hand-finished and shrink-resistant, are made in pure wool, pure silk, or silk and wool. They are stocked by better outfitters at tax-free prices from about £3.10 a set to prices that may sound high but give ultimate value. Be comfortable—invest in Braemar underwear.



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WHEN I COME HOME after a hard day's work
and sink into the sustaining softness of my

Parker-Knoll chair, the

cares that weighed upon me throughout
the day float away like summer clouds.

In the mood of general benevolence,
thus induced, I perceive one thing only
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that is another Parker-Knoll —
so that I may offer a seat to
a friend without a prick of
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CHARIVARIA

If leading motor manufacturers continue to merge, motorists will at least be saved the trouble of putting their names down on more than one list.

In Korea a line is defined as that which has length, breadth, but no tactical advantage to either side.

All persons found Lamping on Trenowar Farm, Roche, will be prosecuted. All dogs straying will be shot after this date, 15.11.51
—(Signed) S. L. Best.

Advt. in St. Austell Guardian
Delicately put.

Archimedes' Principle?

"LEVERS TO RAISE £10M"
Daily Telegraph

"Mr. Frank Nichols (56), a farmer of Zennor, Cornwall, went down a disused shaft of the old Ding Dong tin mine to-day to rescue two of his dogs which were found there last night after being in the shaft for ten days.

Two minesweepers are on their way to the area to assist the search."
Coventry Evening Telegraph

Thorough.

The new stamped-letter-card slot machine being tried out at a railway station will be a boon to three kinds of travellers: those who got in hours after those who were to meet them had gone; those who didn't expect to arrive at that station at all; and those who put the journey off because of another sudden rise in fares.

Professor Lincoln LaPaz, of the New Mexico Institute of Meteorics, says that the odds are three chances out of ten that someone will be hit by a meteorite every hundred years. Interesting as far as it goes, but couldn't be tell us who?

In a football match between Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges, in Philadelphia, extra points were awarded for sportsmanship, including "respect for official authority, bench conduct, player conduct, fan conduct, mental poise under pressure and physical fitness at the end of the game," says the *New York Herald-Tribune*. The losing side had a wonderful chance of saving the game by a really sporting acceptance of the decision.

"HULA DANCER
LOSES SUIT"
Empire News

Send for the Watch Committee!



THE FALL

IT is terrible to fall; and it is not only pride that precedes it,
But all self-movement, the merest business of body
and brain.
Falling we lose ourselves; and something is irredeemable,
Some loss absolute; part of us will never be the same
again.

Everything alive is always haunted by the fear of
falling,
And man, the ill-balanced biped, probably the most
of all:
We minimize the menace with euphemism, talking of
slips and tumbles,
But knowing in our heart of hearts that the ultimate
horror is to fall.

The whole of human thought echoes with lament for
the fallen,
And always with this under-current of something
verging on despair.
Humpty Dumpty fell greatly, and so did Hamlet's
mother:
Leaves fall from the autumn trees, and brightness
falls from the air:

And the mighty especially have fallen, not only Saul
and Jonathan,
But Goliath, and Dagon, and Jericho's walls when
the trumpets spoke:
Great Caesar (and you and I and all of us fell down
with him):
And the great lord of Luna fell at that deadly stroke:

Troy fell, and the Roman Empire: Lucifer took nine
days falling,
Recording an all-time high to achieve an all-time
low:
Fallen men are heroic and fallen women are
sordid,
But both with an established place in the human
catalogue of woe.

For gravity would re-create the recumbent kingdom
of inertia,
Penning creation prostrate in the primal prison of
the slime:
But life consists in successfully defying negative
forces:
And gravity has lain for life since the beginning of
time.

P. M. HUBBARD

ALL THE GRACES

YOU look a wreck. Have you
no regard for your garmental
prestige?"

"My garmental prestige?"

"I'm afraid you don't read the
Tailor and Cutter. 'The garmental
prestige of Mr. Churchill's new
Cabinet,' they say, 'is immediately
hoisted by the inclusion of Mr.
Eden.' Though I regret to say they
go on to add '—even though that
gentleman has shown a declining
interest in matters sartorial during
recent years.'"

"You think he's going to let us
down?"

"You're the last one who ought
to make suggestions of that kind."

"You don't think my pullover
is suitable for town wear. The
reason I wear it is I'm cold."

"Other people wear waistcoats."

"I'm wearing one under my
pullover."

"That accounts for your lumpy
appearance, of course. Wear the

waistcoat on top of the pullover.
That would be better."

"The pullover would show
then at the bottom of the waist-
coat."

"Wear it inside your trousers."

"I don't wear braces. It's a job
to stop my shirt riding up. I
wouldn't have a hope with a pull-
over. My shirt did come out once,
after a long day, when perhaps
I hadn't given it the attention I
ought to. I had my overcoat on
when I found it."

"That was lucky."

"I hadn't had my overcoat on
all the time."

"Other members of the
Cabinet," the *Tailor and Cutter* say,
'please us by their disciplined
adoption of the formal stiff white
collar and townwear's bowler hat.'
No formal stiff white collar for
you, I see. What do you favour
in hats?"

"I haven't got a hat."

"And you talk about Mr. Eden
letting us down."

"I used to have a hat."

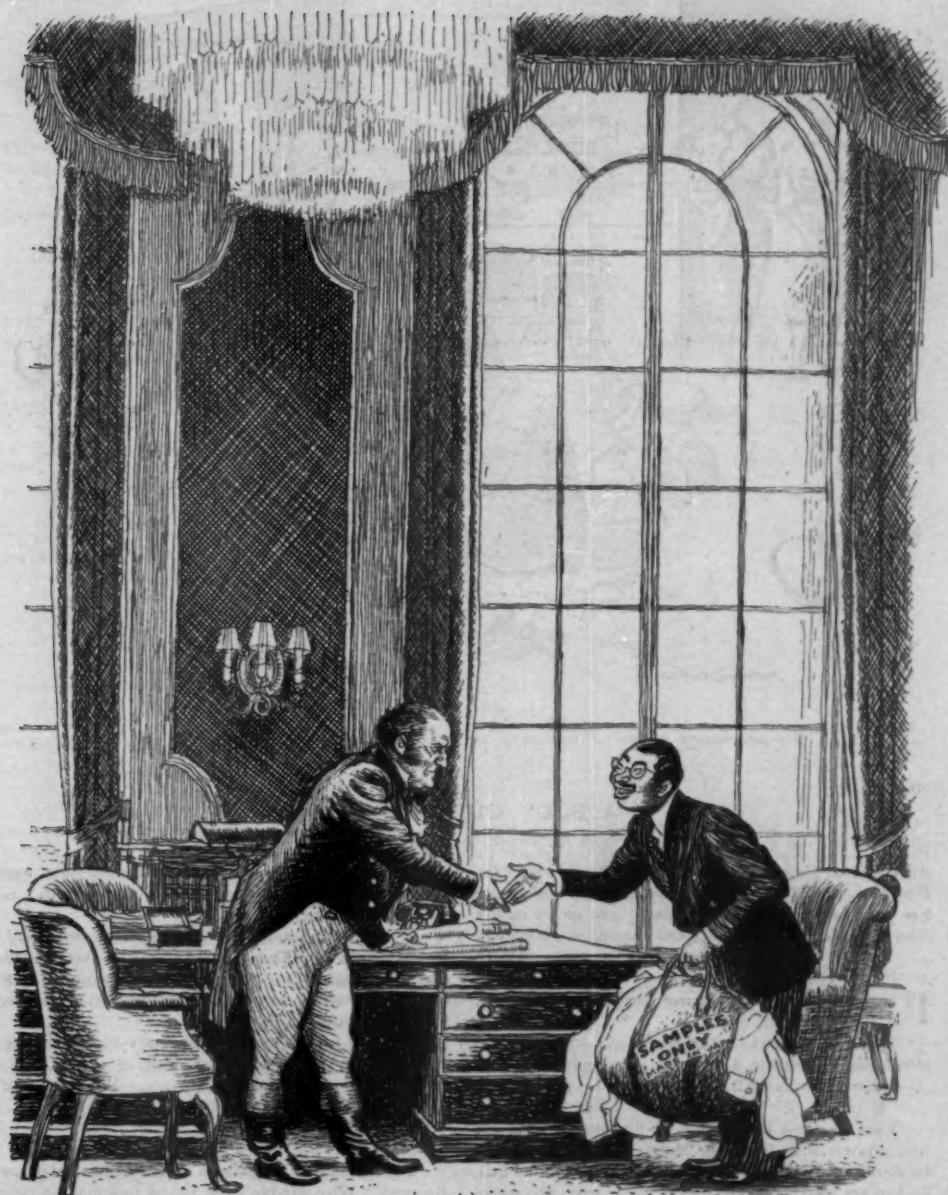
"What sort of a hat?"

"The last thing I remember
about it, my wife tried to give it to
the man who trimmed the hedge.
He looked at it, and turned it round
in his hands, and gave it back to
her. He said 'It's more of a lady's
hat, isn't it?'"

"I'm afraid it's the melancholy
truth that you fall short of the
standards set by Mr. Churchill's new
Ministers. The *Tailor and Cutter*,
summing up, say that it is the
best-dressed Cabinet we have had
for a number of years. 'On the
whole,' the paper comments with
evident approval, 'this Cabinet pro-
duces a good average fashionable
figure.'"

"At least what you tell me
relieves me of worry as to a possible
reason why I'm not in."

G. A. C. WITHERIDGE



END OF HOSTILITIES

"Now you buy cheap shirt, Mister?"



"We can manage without a maid now, but I don't know where we'd be without him."

A BODY OUT OF PLACE

From the French: Le Cadavre Ambulant

After reading Georges Simenon's "The Window Over the Way" (translated by Geoffrey Sainsbury), but with rather less reference to that than to twenty-one or so earlier Simenon volumes read with equal absorption in the last dozen years.

IT was for no particular reason that Jules muttered:
"Yes, well . . ."

A foolish remark! And he could see that the examining magistrate was of the same opinion.

Jules said to himself:

"If only . . ."

That was just it! If only he had managed to get into a novel with Inspector Maigret in it, he was sure he could have cut a better figure . . . The trouble was, he had got into one of the others. Not even one where the scene was in the tropics . . . He said to himself:

"That might have been quite interesting . . ."

But no. Here he was in the very kind of thing he would have wished to avoid . . . It was obvious

now. He had got into a story where people were indulgent and fatherly about the follies of youth.

"And I'm the youth . . ."

It was maddening! What would Annette say? But even she would have found it hard to talk to this examining magistrate, with his big nose and his habit of brushing his left ear with his hand, so that it quivered for seconds afterwards . . .

Besides, Jules knew that he really belonged in an English novel. An English detective novel, where there wasn't all this psychology . . . Where the girl didn't really matter at all, but was just a pretty . . . What did they call it?

Stooge!

The examining magistrate looked at his watch and frowned. Why wouldn't the young fool make a clean breast of it? It was clear enough what he had tried to do and how he had come to grief . . .

To impress some girl, that was it. That was the only reason! This pink-faced English youth with his

sports coat, his flannel trousers expensively cut . . . The examining magistrate said unexpectedly:

"Your name isn't even Jules, is it?"

For never could there have been a more obvious William . . . But Jules said sullenly:

"Yes . . ."

It was true. He had been christened Jules! Perhaps the whole thing had started from that . . .

In point of fact, it had. Annette had said:

"We might be French, you and I . . . Our names . . ."

"What about it?"

"Well . . ."

She was the sort of simple-faced girl who finds it easy to look sulky. She couldn't explain exactly, but what she meant was:

"French names, French behaviour!"

And so, when they had discovered the body . . .

Jules was used to being in English novels. He wanted to call the police, and say:

"There's been a murder! I think . . ."

And go on to tell them what he thought! He was quite ready to spend the next few days investigating on his own account, while Annette watched admiringly. Perhaps she would be kidnapped and he would rescue her . . .

But Annette wanted to be in a Simenon novel and have some personality. She said:

"I'm tired of being an English rose, stamping my foot prettily and pouting at breakfast! Let's get into a Simenon story . . ."

A Simenon story, where she could get up at midday, smoking a cigarette . . .

And open the door in a shabby dressing-gown, with wrinkled stockings!

The body had looked very unpleasant. But it had entered Jules's head to say:

"Suppose I took it over to France . . ."

It would be quite easy, in his brother's motor-boat. The sea was calm and there was no one else on the beach.

What decided Jules was Annette's expression. She could not keep an admiring look out of her eyes. She even sighed, as much as to say:

"How wonderful . . ."

But the journey had been a nightmare. And now as he faced the examining magistrate, Jules would have given anything not to have found the body at all . . .

The man refused to treat it as a symbol, in the English fashion. He insisted on behaving as if it were some person who was really dead . . .

And as if Jules had had something to do with it! No matter how often he said he had only moved it, the examining magistrate insisted:

"Why?"

And all Jules could say was:

"Yes, well . . ."

But Annette would have loved all this. She would have lit a cigarette, and tried . . .

And tried to entice the man away from his wife!

Jules said to himself suddenly:

"If I confessed, she'd be delighted . . ."

They would need her as a witness. She'd get a free trip to France! He could imagine her on the steamer . . . Pretending to be a *femme fatale* at the bar!

And after all, they could always get out of it by telling the truth. When Annette had cut as dramatic a figure as she wished . . .

On an impulse he muttered:

"I did it . . . There was a girl there . . . Her name was Annette . . ."

RICHARD MALLETT

COMPLEX

I HOPE that Space-travel comes in my time. I hope the Government won't ban it, Because I have a terrible complex. What began it Was being wheeled around in a pram by my nursemaid, Janet.

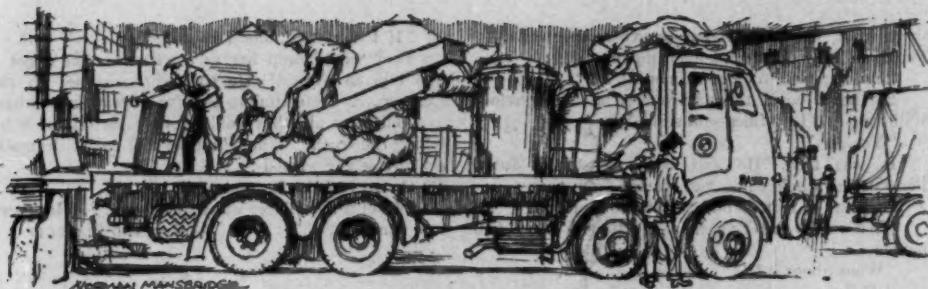
I always found it terribly humiliating. And now that I am a man it

Seems terribly humiliating, being wheeled around on a planet.

E. V. MILNER



"He's scarcely touched his lunch again."



TO-NIGHT AND EVERY NIGHT

The Road Haulage Boys

IT seems to me that we are roaring along the dark wet road pretty smartly, but I expect this is only my nervous imagination. The law restricts us to 20 m.p.h., and Johnnie Elsdon, holding the wheel half a street away on the other side of the cab, impresses me as a law-abiding young man. If the drumming of the Diesel does ease somewhat when an oncoming lorry flashes "Cops!" with its headlights, no doubt that's just to be on the safe side. A sleek saloon, conspicuously rare at 3 A.M., approaches and is swallowed up. "That's them," shouts my pilot. And for a mile or two we pass the warning on.

To be fair to both sides, the nightriders are on good terms with the law, and the language of the lights extends beyond a mere cry of "Cave!" Someone should get out a phrase-book. All lights doused three times: "I am going to slow down, and may turn right or left." An offside flash: "Can I pass you?" An offside flash from the man in front: "Come on, road clear"—and you pull out and overtake, but don't pull in again until you get the same signal again from behind to show that your fifty-odd feet of load is fully past. Sometimes this seems to take an eternity, especially when another juggernaut is hurtling down on you as you gain the painful inches up, say, Little Brickhill. But you have simple faith in the judgment of the man in front: if he says you can pass, you can pass; and it is an unpardonable courtesy to omit the double blink of your tail light—"Thanks . . .

mate"—when you're safely on the near side once more. The code is observed fairly rigidly, though Johnnie admits that he nearly had a load of girders in his cab last week. Men drawing trailers have mates, and this mate, neglecting the usual aids to navigation, gave his driver the all-clear too soon. It was a near thing. He explained at the next "caff" that he had forgotten about the trailer. "I told him to try and remember," says Johnnie, flashing three times, slowing, and lurching off the road into a park crammed with hooded shapes.

This is our third wayside halt. The caff is crowded. Already taking sausages, bacon, mashed, slice and tea (1s. 11d.) is Johnnie's brother Alf, and another brother, Albert, is only a couple of minutes behind us. Albert has been delayed. It seems that Old Whacker has battery trouble to-night, and Albert is towing his eight-wheeler into motion after each stop. We listen with interest to a rehearsal of his address

to the maintenance crew when he reaches his depot.

Like all the others, this caff is devoid of those glamorous amenities hinted at from time to time in the sensational press. ("All the lads are lookin' for one of those," says Albert with a wink when I raise the subject.) There are no brawls, no blondes, no fruit machines even. The nearest thing to violence is the notice over the counter: "If the customer who keeps pinching our knives will ask here he can have a real sharp one and cut his —throat." Like the stock of collar-studs, combs, salted nuts and razor-blades it has been there a long time. Somebody has paid the juke-box threepence, and its maroon and amber console is illuminated to the strains of "I'm gonna paper my walls with love letters," but no one seems to be listening. Alf, between mouthfuls, is reading aloud a film-star's recipe for married happiness. He is unimpressed. "Don't they come the old gravy, though, eh?"



The talk is nine-tenths shop, laced with an elusive jargon. Loads, engine performances and crack-ups form the dominating topics, crack-ups particularly; these are discussed with lively interest, and Albert, reviewing a mishap of the night before, seems confident of my special attention. "Six-wheeler Albion, it was," he explains zestfully—"same as what you're in to-night. 'C' licence, though. Run in the back of a showboat,* down Markyate, smashed right to atoms more or less, wasn't it, Alf?" And Alf, taking up the tale with gusto, exhibits undesirable powers of description and imagery. "Tell you what," he concludes—"they've got the wreck at a garage on the A.5. What say we have a dekko when we get down there?" (Half an hour later we do have a dekko, and enjoy every minute of it—all except me.)

This turn of talk even cheers up Old Whacker, who tells with relish of the eight-wheeler that went through the butcher's shop in Fenny, supported the top storey all night and "never woke the — baby" (a pleasing twist). And Albert is recalling an adventure with a tank of acid, "coming a bit sharp" through Towcester in the snow, when Johnnie gets up and zips his leather jacket, mentioning the necessity of bashing on.

I am aware that under Nationalization accidents are rarer—the maximum driving hours of the Transport Act are more meticulously respected, and men dozing in the cab until their wheels jolt the kerb (not always on their own side of the road) are seldom met with now—but, as we bash on towards Dunstable, I am determined to be vigilant. Four eyes are better than two. Our near-side wheels seem so very near the near side, and Johnnie Elsdon, sole custodian of (a) ten tons of lorry, (b) several thousand pounds' worth of ironclad switch-gear and (c) me, seems so very far away. The lights ahead are hypnotizing and deceptive. Are they strong lights in the distance, or weak lights close to? Do any of them signalize jutting girders, or overhanging loads? Is the system

* Pantechnicon



of twin, independent tail-lights entirely foolproof? All along the road the talking lights are talking. We hammer on relentlessly. The din of the engine becomes part of creation, weaving sound-patterns that seem to take on shapes and colours, merging, hiving-off, reforming, swelling and dying in a persuasive lullaby . . .

When I wake up we are roaring out of St. Albans. Five lorries are pulled into a "lay-by"—one with a puncture, four lending a hand. It means they will all lose precedence in the off-loading rank, but no member of this fraternity is left to face adversity alone.

Nor is comradeship the only grace. There is plenty of proper pride about. You should hear Alf on his number one priority dash with foam for an oil fire, or Albert, engagingly boastful, telling of a load of fish "transhipped" after a breakdown and got on the road again in under twenty minutes. The job has its satisfactions. Only yesterday the load now rushing along behind us was in the final stages of manufacture at a Birmingham works: in a few hours it will be in the hold of s.s. *City of Chicago*, bound for Cape-town. You can't do much more than that for the export drive.

London Colney, full of the lorries of the Lancashire drivers who change over and sleep here . . . through South Mimms and across the Great North Road . . . is that the dawn just showing? Not yet; only the night glow of London . . . Barnet, and a lonely postman going to work . . . Archway, for a last cup of tea and a doughnut . . . and the world is waking up. There are absurd little bus-queues in deserted Commercial Road.

It is daylight when we roll through the dock gates, and I sense a wave of resentment from the other side of the cab as Johnnie, snapping off his lights, joins that inferior race, the day-men. Under the tangle of cranes and funnels we yawn, shake hands and wish each other luck. But I have twice his luck already. He has his load to hand over yet, so I shall be in bed long before he is. And I shan't be driving back to Birmingham to-night.

J. B. BOOTHROYD



AT THE PICTURES

The Light Touch—Scrooge

THE main trouble about *The Light Touch* (Director: RICHARD BROOKS), which is one of those tremendously gay crook stories, is that in places it becomes or tries to become serious. This is, of course, a trouble with many gay crook stories: the makers are concerned to show that they are really solid worthy characters at heart and do not mean to imply any real sympathy with crime. Another trouble is an unbelievable circumstance connected with the basis of the plot—the idea that a naive young girl painter should be able to produce from photographs and reproductions only, without working from the original, a copy of a Renaissance picture that is quite unidentifiable as a copy except by experts with fluorescent rays and so forth. Normally if a film is entertaining I'm not much bothered by such incredibilities of detail, though for many people they seem to spoil all chance of enjoyment; but this one seemed for some reason unusually obtrusive. All the same, the piece is quite nicely done and should pass the time pleasantly enough. PIER ANGELI as the girl is charming without having anything very much to do, and STEWART GRANGER appears as that perennially popular figure the gay, flippant but

good-hearted scoundrel. The story is something complicated about his scheme to double-cross the smooth mastermind (GEORGE SANDERS) who employed him to steal the picture in question. He declares it to have been accidentally burnt while, in fact, he keeps it inside his typewriter-case (which is always, by the way, stood precariously upright rather than laid safely flat, for the sake of the confusion it may cause if it falls over—from the side of a boat, for instance) for sale to a client of his own, meanwhile getting this girl to produce another copy which . . . Well, you see the idea—I hope; it would be very troublesome to explain it in detail. An entertaining trifle, somewhat damped by the obligatory moral ending—"Anna realizes that their love has reformed him," says the synopsis audaciously—and notable not only for RHYS WILLIAMS' brief appearance with a Scottish accent but also for putting you on your guard against forged fifteenth-century paintings. No zinc in the white, no cadmium in the yellow, no hydrogen sulphide in the blue—remember that.

* * * * *

Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Another new one in London is an entertaining Bob Hope: *My Favourite Spy*. The third group of Maugham stories, *Encore* (28/11/51), continues. Unreserved recommendation still *Edward and Caroline* (26/9/51).

New releases include nothing I've written at length about; *Meet Danny Wilson* is an entertaining musical melodrama with some good comic playing. Last week's release *The Blue Veil* (14/11/51) is a sentimental story saved by acting, writing and direction.

RICHARD MALLETT



Scrooge (ALASTAIR SIM) and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.



Sam Conride—STEWART GRANGER
Felix Guignol—GEORGE SANDERS

FROM THE CHINESE

The Father

"**T**hese are the old days,"
Said the scribe Ching Fo,
"The earliest lesson
Of the young child
Was the reading of the tablets.
To know the letters
Was the first accomplishment
Of the infant.
And in old age
The skilful scribe
Was named, respectfully,
A man of letters.
Blessed was the man
Who could read a book,
More blessed still
The man who possessed one:
And even he
Who wrote a book
Was held in more honour
Than the dancing girls,
The wandering acrobats,
The public buffoons,
Or hired wrestlers."

"Now," said the scribe Ching Fo,
"In these enlightened days,
The rulers, every year,
Expend more treasure
On the teaching of children,
The schools are more numerous,
The children
Learn longer at the schools:
But fewer children
Are able to read.
Those who can
Are less able than their ancestors:
Those who can not
Suffer no shame
And little injury."

"Nay," said the scribe Ching Fo,
"At the public elections
For the choice of Rulers,
By the benevolent laws,
There is particular provision
For the counting of the votes
Of those unable
To read the names
Of the candidates,
Or their proclamations
Of belief and behaviour.
Why, indeed," said the scribe
Ching Fo,
"In these days
Should any child exert himself
To read and write?
Without this labour
He can relish the dancing girls,

The wandering acrobats,
The public buffoons,
Or hired wrestlers.
All day,
From the rising of the sun
Till the heart of night,
He can hold his ear
To the magical box,
Receive loose music
Or learned instruction.
He can gaze
At the magical screen
And behold the statesmen,
The racing camels,
Or the public wrestlers.
He can visit
The House of Motion
Where painted persons
Appear to be speaking.
In the public tablets
There are many sheets
Of connected pictures
Which tell fine tales

Of love and adventure
For those unable
To read and write.
Indeed, such an one
May well find happiness
And wealth and wisdom.
One thing only
May mar his contentment:
To make a wager
On the wrestling matches,
Or predict the future
Of the racing camels,
It is still useful
To be able to read
The names of the wrestlers,
The history of the camels,
Their deeds and ancestors.
But even this
May be done for him
If he has a good father,
Who was taught to read
In the bad old days."

A. P. H.



THE CORNER CUPBOARD

MR. GROOBY was just going in at his front door as I passed. He was wearing his shapeless rain-coat, and the bald patch at the back of his head shone pink in the rays of the declining sun. It is a small bald patch, and I was wondering whether he knew about it when he came out again. He peered vaguely around his front garden and then called across to me: "Have you seen Gordon and Gregory?"

I hadn't.

"They've taken the pans," he said in a voice devoid of expression.

"Oh," I said.

He came out of his garden and walked with me down the road. We talked about the weather. Mr. Grooby is very sound on the weather. He collects rainfall statistics in the way more frivolous people collect batting averages.

"I see West Hartlepool had the driest September since 1927," I said.

"Fishguard's sunshine figures were disappointing," Mr. Grooby said.

This conversation didn't develop because we kept darting off the unmade road to rootle amongst the nettles or clamber over a pile of builders' rubbish. When we reached my gate I handed him a frying-pan and a kettle, which he tucked under his arm, his hands being already

occupied with four saucepans and a "steamer."

"Thanks," he said, turning and shambling off up the road.

"You're welcome," I said. I'm sorry for Mr. Grooby, and I wondered how he had discovered so quickly on entering his house that the children had taken all the pans. Was Mrs. Grooby standing at the top of the stairs waiting to tell him, or had he rushed straight into the kitchen to prepare a meal?

I watched him going up the road, but he kept dropping a pan and then all the others as he stooped to pick it up. It was too sad, so I walked down the path and let myself in at my own front door.

I said hello to my wife and walked through into the kitchen. "How are your pans?" I said.

"All right," my wife said; "but the corner cupboard and the sledge-hammer have gone."

I walked through into the sitting-room and made a rapid count of the fireside chairs. Since the Grooby boys started getting around we've formed the habit of checking everything remotely portable at least once a day, except the grand piano. We reckon we needn't check that until the youngest Grooby gets out of his long frocks and into his leather jerkin.

The corner cupboard was the one I'd put into the shed in case I should feel like trying to make the left-hand door fit. Then it came to me what my wife had said. It was like what I understand the film people call a "delayed take," but so delayed that it needed some additional dialogue. I went back to the kitchen.

"The corner cupboard and what?" I said.

"The sledge-hammer."

This was serious. I went out of the house to see if I could see the Grooby boys or even hear them, but everything was still and quiet. Nothing moved except one of the lace curtains in the house opposite, which twitched a little as Mrs. Fish adjusted her viewpoint to include me. I made a mental note to

ask Mrs. Fish about how Grooby knew the pans were missing. Mrs. Fish would know. Then I went back into the house.

"Well, that's the end of the corner cupboard," I said to my wife. "The Groobys will have pulverised it by now with the sledge-hammer."

"I don't like to think of those little boys loose with a sledge-hammer," my wife said.

"Neither do I," I said.

"They might hurt themselves."

Women make these remarks without thinking. I took a walk round the house, checking things. I should have liked to look out of the upstairs windows, but I thought it might worry Mrs. Fish. I was just thinking how I could have fixed that cupboard when the bell rang and I went to the door. It was Gordon and Gregory Grooby.

"Please, have you got any wheels?" they said.

"You ought to be in bed, or at least having your supper," I said, thinking of Mr. Grooby and all those pans.

"Because we're making a cart," they said.

"Where's my sledge-hammer?" I said.

"The baby's got it."

"The baby?"

"He's taken it to bed with him."

"What sort of a cart is it?" I said.

"We found a funny-shaped old box."

"Oh."

"We thought it'd be useful for carrying things around."

"What things?"

"Oh, spoons and umbrellas and people's hats and things," they said, gazing past me into the hall.

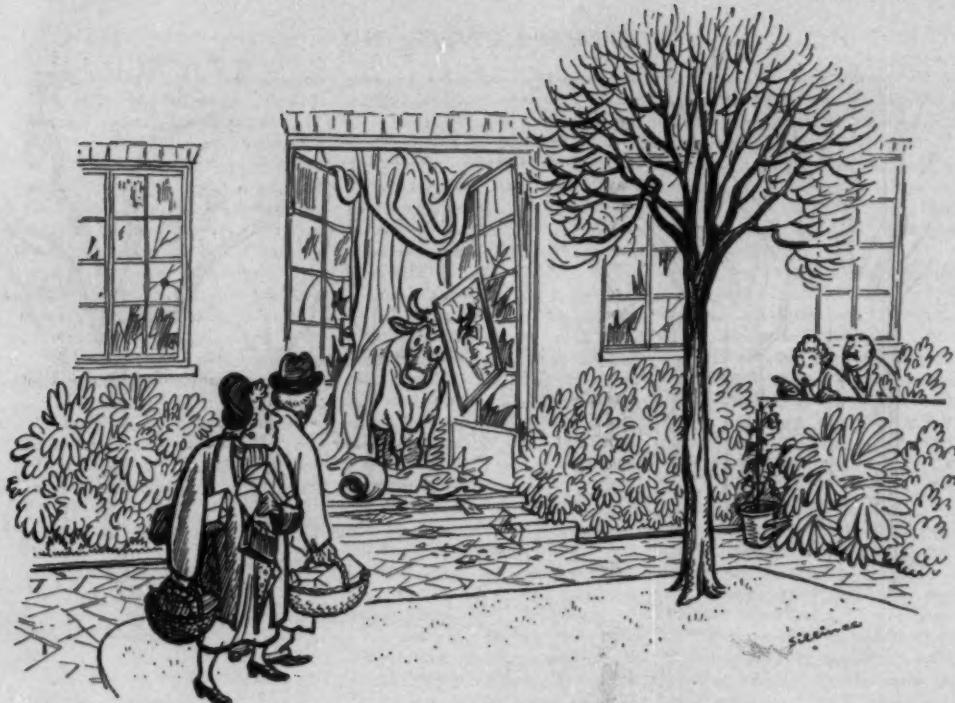
"What did you want the sledge-hammer for?" I said.

"If we can't get the wheels we'll have to make it into a sledge . . ."

I closed the door and leaned against it. On further consideration I believe Mr. Grooby must know about that bald patch. The surprising thing is that any of us have any hair at all, and that includes Mrs. Fish . . .







"We thought something might be wrong, but we didn't like to interfere."

SO YOU WANT TO BE A SCREEN ACTOR

THE profession is somewhat overcrowded, but I shall be glad to examine your qualifications. First, and perhaps most important, do you understand how to use a telephone?

Yes, indeed. I dial the required number, stubbing out my cigarette to denote mental agitation, and also to provide additional action. I am answered before the bell has time to ring. I say "Is that you?" and it always is.

How is your conversation terminated?

The other party hangs up on me—a procedure you would think I might learn to recognize after a bit. However, I am always under the impression I have been cut off, and I jiggle the thing up and down, exclaiming "Operator! Operator!"

And then?

I go out and get a drink. Two whiskies tossed back smartly with an air of desperation are sufficient to put me under the table in a matter of seconds. Fortunately, my recuperative powers are equally instantaneous.

Tell me in your own words how you would knock a man out.

I could not do it. It is absolutely impossible to render a man unconscious merely by hitting him.

But when you have knocked him head-over-heels a number of times with terrific swings to the jaw he obligingly proffers, crashed a chair repeatedly over his head, dropped on him from a balcony, broken the lamp on his scalp and hurled him against the wall two or three times, surely he shows some signs of damage?

Oh yes, his hair gets a little ruffled.

How would you discover a corpse?

By tripping over it. I should then make some light and jesting remark to relieve the tension of the moment.

How would you die yourself?

In the arms of my buddy, murmuring some philosophical sentiment such as "I guess this is it."

When would you wear a hat?

Only indoors.

How do you drive a car?

I saw the wheel madly this way and that, with my head turned over my shoulder to chat to the occupants of the back.

How many shots will a revolver fire without having to be reloaded?

That, naturally, depends entirely on the number of persons to be shot.

You seem reasonably well grounded in your more active duties. I shall now test you for emotion. You have proposed to the girl you love and, owing to a foolish misunderstanding, she has turned you down—how, by the way, does she do it?

She takes my hand gently and says "Let's not spoil it all."

Very good! Now, how do you accept your rejection?

I give a wry smile. I tell her she's a swell kid and she's not to worry—I'll get by.

But supposing she is your wife, and has communicated to you her intention to leave you. What have you to say to that?

"O.K., if that's the way you want it."

To which she responds?

"That's the way I want it."

I observe, of course, that you are masculine by sex. Let us imagine, however, that you are a girl. How would you, should the occasion arise, as it so frequently does, conceal your beauty and appear to one and all as a dull and dowdy frump?

By assuming a pair of horn-rimmed glasses.
And when you removed them towards the climax?
My unsuspected loveliness would elicit gasps from all beholders.

How would you, still as a woman, simulate extreme old age?

I should walk with an ebony cane.

Reverting to male characterizations, how would you portray a plain-clothes detective?

By wearing a mackintosh, keeping my hands in my pockets and pulling my hat over my eyes.

And a newspaper reporter?

By wearing a mackintosh, keeping my hands in my pockets and pushing my hat to the back of my head.

Thank you, I think that will do. You strike me as being unusually gifted.

I am most grate— I mean, Gee, thanks a lot! Now, how do I get a job?

That, I fear, is the one thing you have yet to learn. Leave your name and address as you go out, and we will let you know.

COLIN HOWARD



BRUSH UP



THE Purbright family's tooth-brush organization was on a firm basis: his were red and his wife's green. When he turned for the first time into the small chemist's shop in Melbourne he felt that, stranger though he was, he knew how he stood. "I'd like a red tooth-brush," he said.

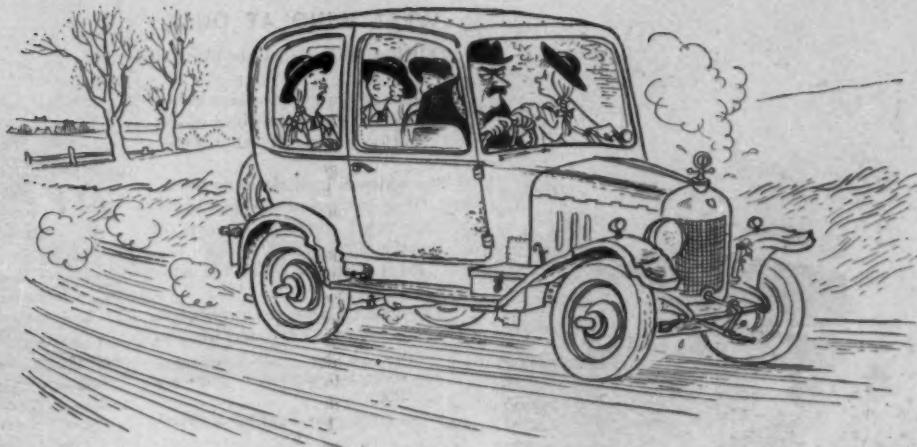
The chemist was a sturdy man with a large jaw and steel-rimmed spectacles. "Fresh out of red ones," he said, friendly but detached. "No red tooth-brush?" said Purbright, taken aback. "Take a white one," said the chemist. "I couldn't have a *white* one," said Purbright. The chemist seemed to see him for the first time. Adjusting his spectacles he gave him a kindly, considering look. "What's the matter with you?" he asked. "Got red teeth, is it?" Purbright took his white tooth-brush home and put it in the bathroom cupboard. In the ecstasy of entertaining Cranmer, who was down from Sydney for the night, he thought no more about it.

The following evening Purbright and his wife were alone again. Purbright was reading a book about the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. "Cranmer forgot his tooth-brush," said his wife. "Myriads of diverse, many-coloured gastropods abound to delight the tourist," said Purbright. "What did you say?" His wife repeated her remark. "There is a cardboard fountain-pen box in my collar drawer," said her husband. "The number of their tiny teeth varies," he added, his voice descending to a murmur, "sometimes as few as sixteen and sometimes, great heavens, as many as three-quarters

of a million." His wife departed in silence for the collar drawer.

Working his way towards bed that evening Purbright thought of his new tooth-brush, but could not find it. He asked his wife about it. "I haven't seen a new one," she said. "Just the usual clutch of unkempt, red blemishes." "It's not a red one," said Purbright, "it's white, I think." "What do you want with a white one?" asked his wife. "That's what the chemist implied when I asked for a red one," said Purbright. "If that's the case," said his wife, "it's on its way to Cranmer. I've just been out to the post. Now perhaps you'll come down off the Great Barrier Reef when I call."

Cranmer's bread-and-butter letter arrived promptly, and Purbright's wife read it aloud to Purbright who, in his turn, was reading about the Great Barrier Reef. His delightful evening in Melbourne, Cranmer wrote, had been crowned by the receipt of the tooth-brush. He could only suppose that it was in recognition of his having remembered unaided to sign the visitor's book. He had given it to his wife, not, he hastened to add, that he was looking a gift tooth-brush in the mouth—they were worth two in the bush—but because in the Cranmer family the wife used white tooth-brushes and the husband blue. (At this point Purbright gave a small, abstracted start, almost, but not quite, coming out of his book.) His wife, Cranmer's letter continued, was overjoyed: as well as being her colour it was, O frabjous day, a Fangpol, her favourite brand and unobtainable up there in



" . . . My father's & racing driver."

Sydney. She said it was like a little bit of England to her, the white cliff of her Dover, and comforting to have about the house.

"There," said Purbright's wife, "an opportunity for you to blow some good." "The *blue* cliff of her Dover," said Purbright absently, marking his place with a finger. "At lunch-time to-morrow," continued his wife, "you will go to that chemist and buy her a stock, at least three."

Purbright duly returned to the chemist's shop. The chemist, sidling along to oppose him, showed recognition. "I've got some red ones in," he said, with faint irony. Purbright avoided his eye. "I'd like three blue Fangpols," he said. The chemist swallowed. "Blue ones," he said, "not red?" "That's it," said Purbright. The chemist's jaw stiffened. "Did you like the one you got the other day?" he asked. Purbright scratched his head. "Yes," he said. They gazed at each other across the counter. The chemist wrapped up three blue tooth-brushes and handed them over. As Purbright paid him he spoke again. "You and your wife," he said, "you use different colours, is it? She has blue ones, perhaps?" Purbright stopped by the door.

"Blue?" he said doubtfully. "No. She uses green." The chemist opened his mouth to speak again, but Purbright felt impelled to close the discussion. "Good day," he said, and left . . .

Purbright came to the end of the last page of the Great Barrier Reef, closed the book and put it down. His wife, who had been watching him, sighed with relief and spoke. "You know those tooth-brushes you sent to Jane Cranmer," she said. Purbright shuddered. "Yes," he said. "I have had a letter from her," said his wife. "She says they are lovely, but the wrong colour." Purbright rose to his feet, and sat down again. "Indeed?" he said. "She says her oaf and blockhead of a husband got the colours wrong in his letter." "You want me to get some—what colour would it be that I should get?" "White," said his wife. "It would be a kindly gesture."

Purbright visited five chemist's shops in the vicinity of his office, but none had Fangpols. Reluctantly, almost in a dream, he returned to the original shop and took up his position at the counter. For half a minute he and the chemist eyed each other in silence. "I've been thinking," said the latter, "that

perhaps you have a large family and each has his own colour: uncles and aunts, wife's relations and what-not all." "No," said Purbright. There was another silence. "I don't know how to begin," said Purbright at last. The chemist looked at him more kindly. "You see life as a chemist," he pronounced. "You learn patience. I am here to sell, you to buy. Just say what you want and I'll either sell it to you or tell you I haven't got it." Purbright gathered his courage. "I'd like three white ones," he said. "Fangpols." The chemist closed his eyes, swayed and opened them again. "Three white ones," he repeated steadily, and handed them over. Purbright paid for them and, nodding speechlessly, left the shop.

"I posted three white tooth-brushes to Jane Cranmer to-day," said Purbright to his wife that evening. "Will you be writing to her?" "I am in the middle of doing so." "Will you tell her in all friendliness," asked Purbright, "that she may brush the Great Barrier Reef with them if she wishes?" His wife was gazing at him thoughtfully. "You need a new tooth-brush, you know," she said at length. "Those red horrors in the bathroom cupboard . . ."

WEST WIND AT DUSK

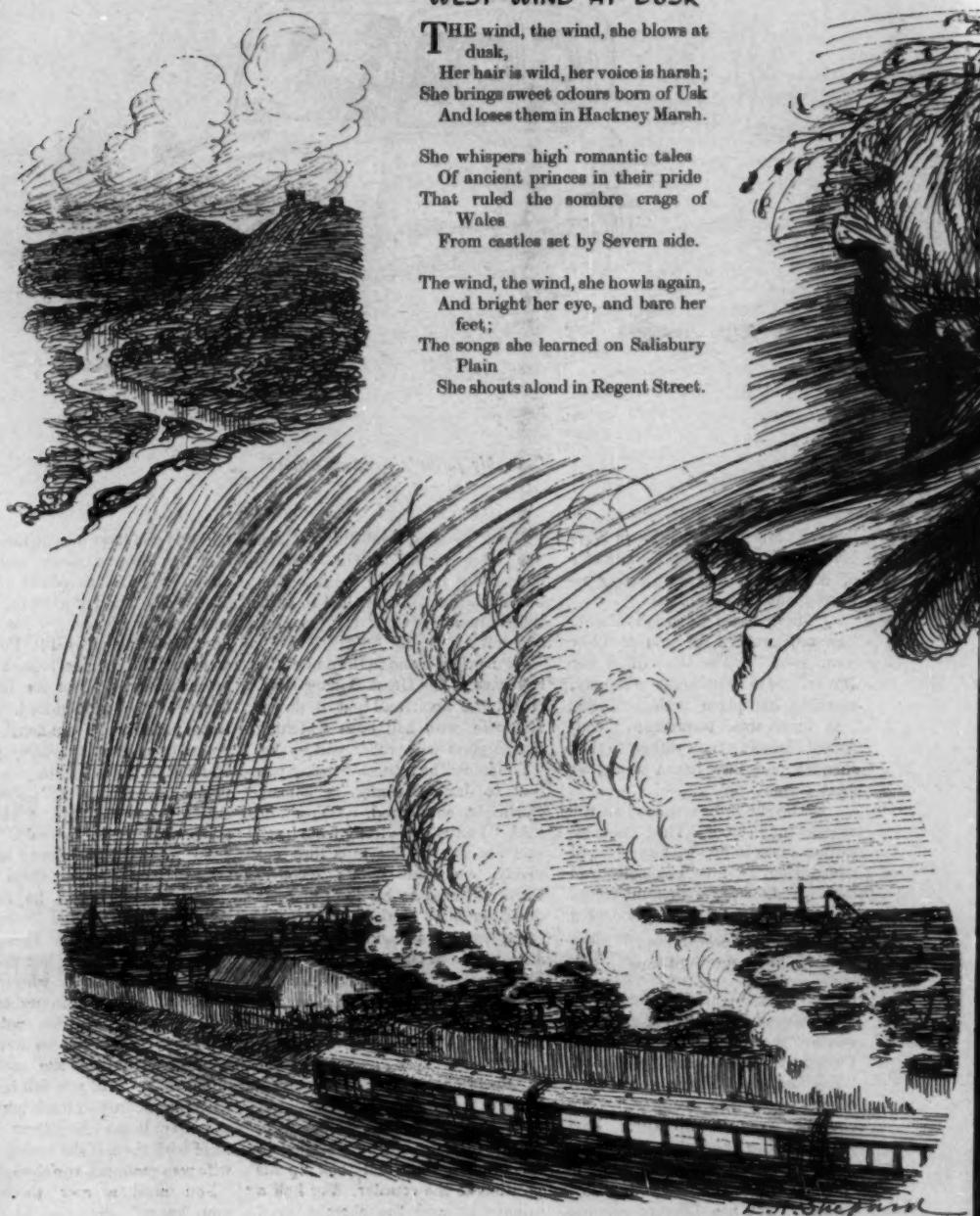
THE wind, the wind, she blows at dusk,

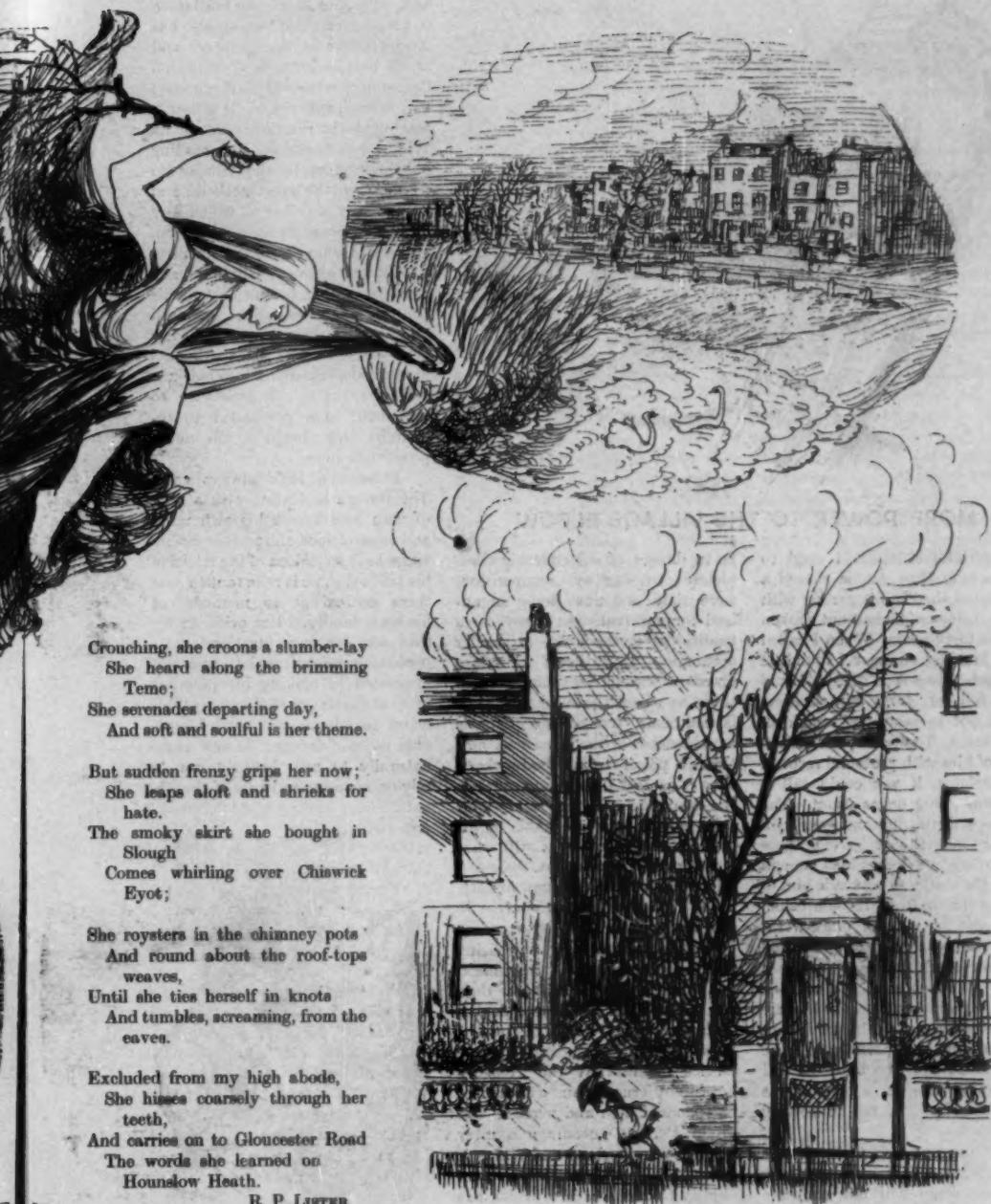
Her hair is wild, her voice is harsh;
She brings sweet odours born of Usk
And loses them in Hackney Marsh.

She whispers high romantic tales
Of ancient princes in their pride
That ruled the sombre crags of
Wales

From castles set by Severn side.

The wind, the wind, she howls again,
And bright her eye, and bare her
feet;
The songs she learned on Salisbury
Plain
She shouts aloud in Regent Street.





Crouching, she croons a slumber-lay
She heard along the brimming
Teme;
She serenades departing day,
And soft and soulful is her theme.

But sudden frenzy grips her now;
She leaps aloft and shrieks for
hate.
The smoky skirt she bought in
Slough
Comes whirling over Chiswick
Eyot;

She roysters in the chimney pots
And round about the roof-tops
weaves,
Until she ties herself in knots
And tumbles, screaming, from the
eaves.

Excluded from my high abode,
She hisses coarsely through her
teeth,
And carries on to Gloucester Road
The words she learned on
Hounslow Heath.

R. P. LISTER



MORE POWER TO THE VILLAGE ELBOW

A BASKET-MAKER I used to know in East Anglia shared a dilapidated shed in his garden with his son, to whom he had not spoken for over forty years. When I called to see him last summer I found he had died. He was a delightful old man, full of tart reminiscence, though not so easy, one imagined, in the home. To my surprise his son spoke of him with profound respect. The business, if you could call it that, was going on as usual. The son was still turning out wonderful baskets and almost giving them away to anyone determined enough to find the shed and persuade him to disgorge them from its confusion. There was no sign of office-work, and certainly no display. I asked him how much I owed him for a basket I had chosen. "Whoi, ten bob," he said; and when I came back later for a much bigger basket I had ordered to a special pattern he repeated "Whoi, ten bob," as if I were crazy. His whole passion was in making baskets, not in getting rid of them.

All this was refreshing, but it left me feeling that basket-making in that village will not continue indefinitely. In fact, the ancient crafts of the countryside would

be in danger of surrendering completely to factory competition, were they not now being organized for survival. In many cases traditional methods are no longer economic. Enthusiasm for crafts breeds a strange sentimentalism in those to whom the mechanical age is anathema, but the adze-fanatic who blanches at the introduction of electric power to a woodworker's shop is as deaf to common sense as the man who still uses a hip-bath because that was the habit of his grandfather. Quality is still what matters most, but output, costs and selling have taken on a new importance. If crafts are to survive in this country it will be by speeding up production and not by being picturesquely reactionary in a smock.

In fact, they are healthier than you might think, and a good deal of their present activity is due to the Rural Industries Bureau, a State service financed by the Treasury but run by Trustees and a Council of independent men and women. Set up in 1921 to encourage country craftsmen in England and Wales, it works closely with the Rural Community Councils, each of which has its own Organizer for rural industries responsible for knowing the needs

and capacities of all the craftsmen in his district. The Bureau also has Area Officers in the country, and at its headquarters on Wimbledon Common a technical staff qualified by practical experience. It is both a teaching body, running courses in its Wimbledon workshops and sending out instructors to the villages to demonstrate the latest methods, and an advisory service, to which any craftsman can apply for information. He pays nothing for either facility. The Bureau exists to help him make what is wanted to the best of his ability and to the highest standard of design. Taking a detached view of all British crafts, it experiments in methods, researches into markets and gives all-round assistance to the small man persuaded to re-organize his business on more productive lines.

Persuasion isn't always easy. The Bureau is dealing with a type of man who knows his own mind and is suspicious of novelty. Sometimes he is so jealous of the tricks of his trade that he is reluctant to pass them on except to members of his own family. His pride in his skill and his concentration on its perfection has often left him uninterested in making his premises more attractive or in showing off his wares to advantage. Such simple aids as card-indexes do not come naturally to men brought up to rely on memory and rule of thumb.





No one wishes to put the village blacksmith into pinstripe trousers, but that is a long way removed from using electric power for his bellows and clearing up the ancestral muddle outside his forge. The character of craftsmen, which in these days is something too precious to be tampered with, is not endangered by a sensible application of science to save time and labour. Economic pressure is steadily bringing a more receptive attitude.

In the years before 1939 rural industries were going through a bad time, and the policy of cheap imported food had greatly depressed those that served farming. As soon as war broke out the Bureau switched all its resources to helping these agricultural craftsmen. An Equipment Loan Fund for rural industries (augmented in 1947 by a Workshops Loan Fund) was started in 1940 to encourage the installation of the new plant that was needed if the blacksmiths and wheelwrights, for instance, were to cope with urgent repairs to hard-driven farm vehicles. Spare parts had to be made; welding was taught, and the village smiths (the most numerous of rural craftsmen) began to assume fresh importance as agricultural engineers. On the smaller farms the horse is still believed to have a future, but smiths are on a safer wicket if they can also deal with the more intricate problems of such things as combine-harvesters and bailers.

After the war the Bureau reorganized its staff on a larger scale. It still gave priority to food production, but was able to return

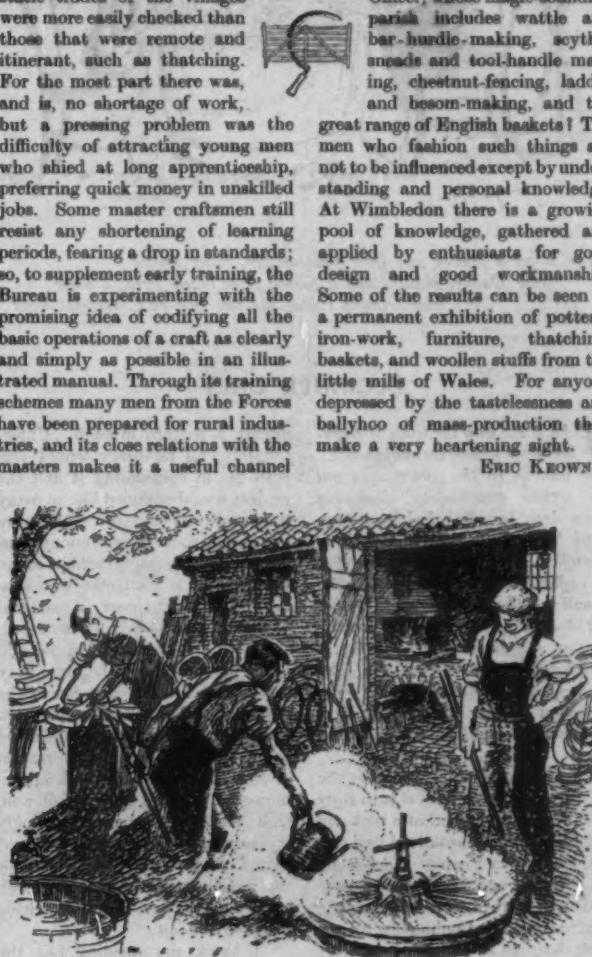
to its original function of assisting all rural industries, in most of which the rising cost of labour and materials had made new techniques and new markets essential if prices were to be kept competitive. In the same way that the smith was adapting himself to machinery, other trades were looking round; the saddler was finding fresh work in the wider field of leather goods. Surveys carried out by the Bureau gave valuable information on the condition of the various crafts and the numbers they employed; the static trades of the villages were more easily checked than those that were remote and itinerant, such as thatching. For the most part there was, and is, no shortage of work, but a pressing problem was the difficulty of attracting young men who shied at long apprenticeship, preferring quick money in unskilled jobs. Some master craftsmen still resist any shortening of learning periods, fearing a drop in standards; so, to supplement early training, the Bureau is experimenting with the promising idea of codifying all the basic operations of a craft as clearly and simply as possible in an illustrated manual. Through its training schemes many men from the Forces have been prepared for rural industries, and its close relations with the masters makes it a useful channel

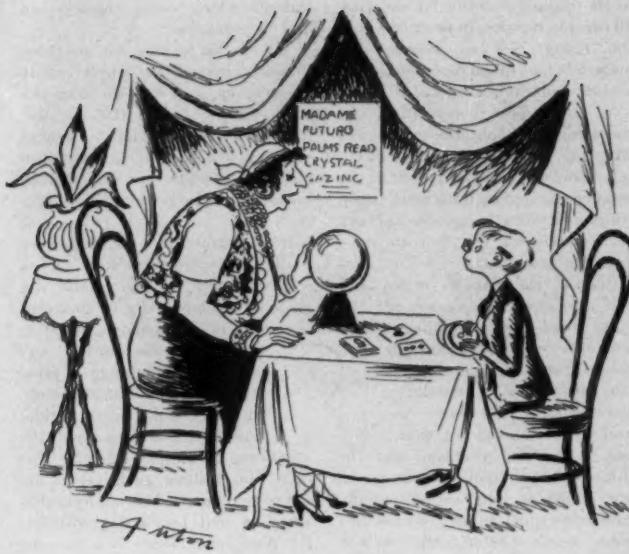
through which young trainees can find the right work.

If all this sounds, for anything so soaked in tradition, a little grimly businesslike, a visit to the Bureau's headquarters dispels the slightest fear that the specialists behind village benches are being dragooned into a loss of character. The Bureau is just as anxious that the hedger shall get a hand-made billhook of perfect balance as that a pottery shall have a modern kiln and a casting-system. Who would not envy its Underwood and Basketry

Officer, whose magic-sounding parish includes wattle and bar-hurdle-making, scythe-mending and tool-handle making, chestnut-fencing, ladder and besom-making, and the great range of English baskets? The men who fashion such things are not to be influenced except by understanding and personal knowledge. At Wimbledon there is a growing pool of knowledge, gathered and applied by enthusiasts for good design and good workmanship. Some of the results can be seen in a permanent exhibition of pottery, iron-work, furniture, thatching, baskets, and woollen stuffs from the little mills of Wales. For anyone depressed by the tastelessness and ballyhoo of mass-production they make a very heartening sight.

ERIC KEOWN





"You'll get a cowboy suit from your mother, roller skates from Daddy, soldiers and a cannon from Uncle Fred, a bugle from Auntie Edna, and feel sick on Christmas night."

BEGINNER ONLY

TAKE the way the titles of popular songs each the subjunctive." The woman in the corner spat out the words venomously, hunching down into herself. Fairbody muttered "I must not allow myself to be ruffled, I must not allow myself to be ruffled." By a continuous effort of will he had made himself debonair; but despite fifteen years of practice he was still liable to let his façade disintegrate under provocation, and Miss Queen provoked him by every inflection of her voice and every movement of her thick, gloved hands.

So far, so good. I find that the only way to write a novel is to start at random and hope that a plot will emerge. More accurately, I find this is the only way I can even get going on a novel, and the method rarely produces more than a first chapter. I once considered publishing all my first chapters as a volume of short stories, leaving it to the reader to

discern a pattern in each. Unfortunately, no publisher would join with me in considering it and the project was abandoned like so many other enthusiasms—my mule farm, my indoor rookery, my anonymous letters in Esperanto. Perhaps somewhere there is a novelist who cannot do first chapters at all and would be glad to buy up my stock.

With a little effort I could add other paragraphs to the one above and arouse a faint curiosity in the reader: Who are these people? In the corner of what was Miss Queen sitting? Where did the conversation go from there? I know well, and in moments of despondency full well, that having become increasingly mysterious I should retire baffled from Chapter Two. Sooner or later the novelist must begin to unravel, and that is the part of fiction-writing I find so difficult.

I think my opening has the necessary qualities of mystery and

enticement. It also gets two characters on the stage right away. Unfortunately, in the course of three hundred pages much more will have to be revealed about them, unless they are to fade out, when they will have to be replaced by other characters who will need thorough investigation just the same. Fairbody seems, at first sight, to be rather unbalanced, so is probably the hero. Miss Queen is very unsympathetic, so she may get married by Fairbody or murdered by him, and this would require a good deal of construction. Worse still, it may be a novel composed mainly of conversations, and then I shall have to find a reply for him to make to her remark, and, that chore completed, I shall immediately have to fit her out with a riposte.

Already the effort of concentration has made me feel bored with my opening. Fairbody and Miss Queen have become stale; their possibilities are exhausted. His self-control is repulsive and her conversational gambit platitudinous. I do not care whether the corner was in a railway carriage, a swimming-bath or the wheat market. Really, one cannot possibly settle down to spend eighty thousand words with people one dislikes.

Eighty thousand words terrify me; all that length trailing after Chapter One. I know that there are various comfortable calculations used by would-be novelists. A typist can easily do three thousand words an hour. It is reasonable to suppose that one who uses only two instead of ten fingers would type at a fifth of this rate, six hundred an hour. Forty minutes before breakfast and an hour before dinner for under three months and one would have a novel. During the day one could be deciding what happened next. There could not be much action in a thousand words, and it should be easy on escalators, in bus queues and during meals to make such simple plans as New visits Marjory at her kiosk or Frowdler ties up Ben and gets confidences out of him with lighted matches. This line of argument leaves one with the preposterous conclusion that a man could easily write four novels a year

as well as doing a wholetime job. The first snag is that self-respect would prevent my working before breakfast. The next is that as one progresses it becomes increasingly hard to decide what *does* happen next, and the interstices of daily life give insufficient time for grappling with the problem. There is also the matter of averages. Experience shows that in order to average an hour a day you have to do at least ten hours on those days when you do happen to be working. My first novel has been under construction for fifteen years and I have only broken into Chapter Two by using completely different characters from those in Chapter One. Chapter Three, where both sets merge their destinies, could theoretically be polished off in a long afternoon. Actually I have been ruminating over it since the second week in January 1943.

How I envy those natural tellers who begin at the beginning and find, thousands and thousands of words later, that they have reached the end. Flaubert's seven years on "Madame Bovary" is a more cheering example; but I am not aiming as high as Flaubert. I want cash, not honour; I want to be a highly-paid commercial novelist seduced from the austereities of art by the lure of gold. It is a misfortune that my methods of composition range me with the artists. Few novelists can have written more slowly, more unhappily, more against the grain.

I shall never return to Fairbody and Miss Queen. I throw them on to the pile of false beginnings. What I really want is to write a novel that opens:

Elizabeth swung her shapely legs as she sat on the edge of the study table. "Will Prof Henshaw mind if I don't do his Algebra?" she wondered. On the Isle, Micky would be coaching his eight and Elizabeth wanted to be there to steady him on his bicycle. "Dear Micky," she gurgled, "the best father a girlie ever had." Somewhere in Somerville, the twang of a bowstring was followed by a harsh, male scream.

R. G. G. PRICE

TABLE TALK

II

QUERY: A certain type of guest
annoys me more than all the rest
By chatting about other ways
Of serving what her plate displays;
For instance, any kind of tart
Will make her start
Praising the herring pasties down at *Loose*.
What should I do?

Answer: Be logical. Remove her dish,
Scrape out the fruit and substitute some fish;
Throw the tin negligently through the air;
Don't stare
But eye her closely as she eats the pastry.
It should taste nasty.





[Summer and Smoke]
Alma Winemiller—
Miss MARGARET JOHNSTON

AT THE PLAY

The Moment of Truth (ADELPHI)
Summer and Smoke
 (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

MR. PETER USTINOV has all the equipment for writing a really good play, except the ability to call a halt to his own exuberant spate of ideas. *The Moment of Truth* begins very well on the theme, thinly disguised, of the capitulation of France in 1940, and then founders in a false comparison between Pétain and King Lear. In a character based to some extent on Laval, Mr. USTINOV has written an absorbing study of a politician whose cynicism is blended with peasant sentiment and peasant courage. So long as this *Prime Minister* is matching his wit impudently against the stolid arrogance of the invader we are held completely; even here the dialogue could be cut, but the portrait as a whole is effective and the mental outflanking of men holding all the cards of victory skilfully managed. Mr. USTINOV then sacrifices his main character, in whom the play has

so far centred, to the firing-squad, and switches his emphasis to the aged *Marshal* who has been planted at the head of the nation as a strategic buffer. A daughter named *Cordelia*, a young photographer of unlimited pessimism who is presumably the Fool, and a final act in which the dotard mourns his daughter in a storm on the battlements of his prison, all make a purely literary point that is both irrelevant and unconvincing. Lear affects us because we see him hounded into insanity by malice; the *Marshal* is senile from the start, a vital pawn in the political game but in himself a pathetic bore.

Even Mr. ERIC PORTMAN cannot do very much for him. Mr. CHARLES GOLDNER has all the jam as the *Prime Minister* and makes the very most of it in a quicksilver performance marred only by an occasional swallowing of his words in crisis. Mr. DONALD ECLES is asked to weep too much as *Foreign Minister*, and Miss JOSEPHINE GRIFFIN might have made more even of a dull *Cordelia*, but Mr. ANTHONY MARLOWE's patriot *General* and Mr. BRIAN WILDE's *Photographer* are good, and Mr. JOHN FERNALD's production makes a brave effort to disguise the play's broken back.

MR. TENNESSEAN WILLIAMS' whimsical dissection of the frustrations of the feeble-witted has become a formula, and his habit of

breaking the gossamer web of affection with sudden strokes of sordid violence still seems crude. At the same time I like his early play, *Summer and Smoke*, much better than either "The Glass Menagerie" or "A Streetcar Named Desire." Its account of the decline and fall of a spinsterish, romantic girl is told with a mort of gauzy mannerism but is nevertheless a moving commentary on the tragic side of love and a delicately understanding treatment of emotional panic. Driven desperate by her passion for a squalid young doctor next door, she regrets having rejected his advances, and, now rejected by him, goes off with a stranger. The melodrama by which the doctor's morals are reformed is much less persuasive than the girl's neurotic drift downhill. The inner conflict in this fragile spirit is revealed by Miss MARGARET JOHNSTON in acting of sustained brilliance. Mr. WILLIAM SYLVESTER gives high voltage to the doctor, Mr. REECE PEMBERTON's multiple set is pleasing and Mr. PETER GLENVILLE's production sensitive.

Recommended

Three more days to see Emlyn Williams impersonating Dickens in his readings (Criterion). *South Pacific* (Drury Lane) is disappointing but gives us Mary Martin at her dazzling best. Don't forget *The Winter's Tale* (Phoenix) will soon be ended. ERIC KEOWN



[The Moment of Truth]
The Victor—Mr. CYRIL LUCKHAM; *The Prime Minister*—Mr. CHARLES GOLDNER
The Marshal—Mr. ERIC PORTMAN



AT THE BALLET

Rosario and Antonio (CAMBRIDGE)

THOSE entrancing artists Rosario and ANTONIO are repeating their recent success at the Cambridge Theatre with their repertoire of Spanish dance and song. They have as accompaniment two pianos alternating with three guitars and a *flamenco* singer, MANOLO MANZANILLA. These slender resources, combined with a great variety of beautiful Spanish costumes, suffice to create a whole world of enchantment.

They do not confine themselves to traditional Spanish dances, but take these as a starting point for their own compositions, and achieve great variety without ever straining their medium too far. They are masters of the lyrical, and even the conversational, possibilities of the castanet, and the castanet in such hands is capable of nuance as delicate as the lift of an eyebrow. It can even be made to suggest the trill of a nightingale, as ANTONIO shows in his charming rendering with his partner of *La Maja y el Ruiseñor* from Granados' opera *Goyescas*. ROSARIO and ANTONIO excel in mime, as well as in the expression of the fiery *flamenco* rhythm of Andalusia; they have a splendid sense of comedy, as they convincingly show in their sketch *Los Lagarteros*, which tells of a youthful husband who discovers his wife secretly sewing baby-clothes; and their eloquent heels have the power to express the most fiery

passion or to utter sounds as gentle and caressing as the flutter of a butterfly's wing.

Since the earliest times Spanish song has been made to be danced as well as sung; and perhaps this is why one finds oneself thinking of ROSARIO and ANTONIO not as dancers pure and simple but as exponents of an art consisting in equal parts of music and dancing. This is particularly true of ANTONIO. He is superb to look at, with music latent in every inch of him as there is in a violin by Stradivarius; but when he begins to dance he gives an impression of being violin, player, music and dancer all rolled into one. This unique quality is seen most clearly in his realization of Sarasate's famous *Zapateado* for violin. It is a pity that there is no violinist to play it for him, and that it must be given on the heavy-sounding piano; none the less, his feet render the speed, the rhythm, the glitter and excitement of this firework display of Sarasate's in a way that the violin could hardly surpass, even to a long trill with his heels that fades away to a breathless pianissimo; and all this with a grace and perfection of control that leave one incredulous that human limbs can be disciplined to perform such prodigies. It is difficult to imagine what must be the feelings of conventional tap-dancers at this dazzling display of virtuosity.

The *Zapateado* is his most

brilliant feat, but the same musical quality is apparent in all he does, whether he is playing a comedy in mime, expressing sensuous passion, or yielding himself to the imperious and fiery gipsy dance rhythms. The art of his partner ROSARIO is an ideal complement to his own, not only for its sheer femininity but because even in its most impassioned moments it has a sense of underlying repose, like deep water lying clear and untroubled by the storms on the surface. Her singing of *flamenco* songs in a warm, slightly husky voice has great and haunting charm—though it must be confessed that ANTONIO's efforts as a singer are less successful. It would have been too extravagant on the part of Nature had she endowed him with a voice to match all the other gifts that she has showered on him.

We in London are perhaps somewhat spoiled by being able to see classical ballet well performed nearly all the year round by one or other of several ballet companies. It is even possible that we see too much Russian ballet. It is all the more enjoyable, therefore, to see dancers of so rare a quality as ROSARIO and ANTONIO, and to be reminded of another and equally great dance tradition—and to have it brought to our notice once in a way that the *tutu* of the classical ballerina and the tunic and tights of her partner are hideousities to which tradition alone has reconciled us. They cannot for a moment bear comparison with the beauty and elegance of the equally traditional costume of the Spanish dancer.

D. C. B.

BEGGAR ON HORSE-POWER-BACK

WHERE beggars whoedle
cadging hikers come,
And itching palm hands on to
hitching thumb.
Small difference in the mendicants;
each begs
Benevolence to spare his aims—or
legs:
And Charity dispenses equal gifts;
Raising the lowly up—or giving
lifts.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON



IMPRESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT

Monday, November 26

The Bill to give effect to some parts of the Treaty of Peace with Japan was the

House of Commons:
Peace with Japan main business of the day, and Mr.

ANTHONY NUTTING moved its Second Reading, getting involved in a rather complicated figure of speech about the Treaty's being the child of the late Labour Government. He was merely its *foster*-father and he relied, he said, on the *real* father, Mr. MORRISON, to protect it from the "murderous intentions" of the Wicked Uncles ("full-blooded Pharaohs" was his actual phrase) on the Labour back-benches.

Mr. ELLIS SMITH laughed in the manner characteristic of Wicked Uncles, but said nowt. Mr. NUTTING, in something of the pleading tones of the mother in old-time melodrama seeking safety for the innocent chee-ild, commended the Bill to the House, urging that the Treaty was the best that could be got, and (as an alternative pleading) that the Opposition was in no position to get uppish about it, anyway.

Mr. MORRISON made no attempt to deny paternity, and, even though at times he appeared to praise the infant with faint damns, he thought it ought not to die the death.

But soft! Wicked Uncle ELLIS SMITH (from Stoke-on-Trent) approaches. He is concerned about the possible effect of unfair Japanese competition on Britain's pottery industry. With a twirl of the wrist he produces, before our very eyes, a tea-cup. Then another.

As everybody got ready to applaud and to watch for the inevitable vase of flowers, Mr. SMITH hastily explained that one of those cups was genuine Staffordshire, the other (he shuddered a little) a Japanese copy. Which was which, he did not say. But the warning went home, and the debate tended to concentrate on the question of competition in the textile and pottery markets.

Some time later, Air Commodore VEE HARVEY rose on the rear-most bench on the Government side and, after speaking for about forty seconds, abruptly whisked a brightly-coloured square of cotton material from beneath his coat. While the rival conjurer across the Floor watched with that "*I-know-how-it's-done*" expression, the Air Commodore flicked out another piece of stuff, which seemed to be identical in every respect. It was the same story—one the real thing (this time, presumably, from Macclesfield), the other a Japanese copy.

MR. PETER THORNEYCROFT, as



Impressions of Parliamentarians

Sir Walter Monckton
Minister of Labour and National Service (Bristol, W.)

President of the Board of Trade, wound up the debate. He took the line that, even if the living conditions and standards of Japanese workers were raised considerably, it would still be possible for their industries to compete severely with Britain's. And that, he thought, was one of the facts of modern life that had to be faced.

MR. HERBERT MORRISON appealed to the Wicked Uncles (number unknown) not to offer violence to the innocent child—but when the motion for the Second Reading was put there were cries of "No!" And that meant a division—382 to 33.

The House then stayed up until after two A.M. talking (a little) of the Home Guard and (a lot) of the Festival of Britain Pleasure Gardens. Mr. DAVID ECCLES, the new Minister

of Works, recommended the retention of the Pleasure Gardens, in Battersea Park, London, for up to five years longer, on the ground that if they were closed now the taxpayers would lose a million pounds, for certain—whereas they might get some of it back if the thing went on. Or even make a profit.

Tuesday, November 27

The game of hunt-the-promise went on merrily to-day, right from the word "Go!"

House of Commons:
Night Maneuvres The rules are quite simple—find a promise (not necessarily authentic) made by the Government and then find means of bringing it, as dramatically as possible, before Parliament.

MR. REGINALD PAGET and MR. LESLIE HALE scored two bulls to-day by presenting, with elaborate gravity, petitions signed by "certain persons" asking that Tory promises of more food—and particularly the "red meat" mentioned by Lord Woolton—be honoured forthwith, or sooner. The two scorers proudly bore their petitions to the Table amid cries of—well, let us say lack of enthusiasm from the Government side.

It must be said that few official Oppositions of recent times have been so keen, so watchful, or so active as the present one. They really do leave no stone unflung in their joyful pursuit of stern duty.

Soon after the sitting began MR. HAROLD MACMILLAN, the Minister for Housing, whose somewhat abrupt and seemingly secretive manner does not precisely appease opposition, very briefly announced that local authorities would be permitted to licence one privately-built house for every one built by the authority, instead of the present one-in-five ratio.

This had the effect of touching on an exposed nerve, so far as the Opposition was concerned, and half the Labour side of the House leaped



"Donna Lucrezia says it will probably this out a little after dinner."

up to protest against this step towards what Mr. CHURCHILL has called a "property-owning democracy." The questioners seemed to find something sinister in the proposal, and there was every sign of a stormy debate in due course.

In fact the House was in liverish mood from the start of the sitting, and it was no surprise when, hours later, there was a lively row and the first suspension in the new Parliament. The Bill to set up the Home Guard was the main business, and it became a night manoeuvre, on lines so familiar to old H.G.s. It had long periods of boredom, and short periods of intense liveliness (all strictly according to pattern) during which Mr. SHINWELL and others on the Opposition side appeared to overlook their C.O.'s orders that there was to be no *factions* opposition, but only the *constructive* kind.

Just when, in the wee sma' hours, the whole thing seemed to be becoming a Tactical Exercise Without Troops, everything hotted up again, and the Commandos arrived.

Before long Mr. SYDNEY SILVERMAN, who specializes in points of order (especially when they use up time), came into conflict with the Chair.

But this time he neglected the first duty of a good H.G. and did not make a preliminary "reco." For the occupant of the Chair was Mr. RHY'S HOPKIN MORRIS, the new Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, who crisply ordered Mr. S. to sit down and be quiet.

The startled Mr. S. said he wanted to challenge the Chair's ruling, and was promptly slapped down (as they say on the movies) for thus breaking the rule that the Chairman's decision (like the Editor's) is final. But he was up again in a second, and Mr. HOPKIN MORRIS promptly announced that if he did not sit down and *stay* down Mr. Speaker would be sent for. Mr. S. got up once more. So Mr. HOPKIN MORRIS stepped firmly from the Chair and, after a short period of intense silence, Mr. Speaker walked in, received a report that Mr. SILVERMAN had "persistently

disregarded the authority of the Chair," and promptly "named" him.

Summoning reinforcements, Mr. SILVERMAN's platoon yelled "No!" when the proposition that he be suspended was put. So there was a noisy division, which resulted in the carrying of the suspension and, on being ordered to withdraw, the offender bowed icily and swep' out.

Wednesday, November 28

There were signs of post-sitting fatigue when Members assembled (notably thin on the ground) for the renewal of hostilities. Everybody seemed too tired to fight, but that, perhaps, will not remain true for long.

Mr. SHINWELL appeared to suggest, in a submission to Mr. Speaker, that Mr. SILVERMAN, given the opportunity, would have apologized to the Chair for his disobedience during the night. But Mr. Speaker said they were so close to the regrettable events referred to that he would prefer a bit more time to think things over.

House of Commons:
Fatigue

SHINE, PERISHING REPUBLIC

SOME months ago, recollecting an urgent 'phone call while waiting for my bill in a restaurant, I had occasion to say "Yet a moment, O tender waiter, and I return." But nobody reads Walt Whitman now and the thing fell flat.

Or take last Sunday, when I said, casually as we got out of the car, "I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled." It had been raining, don't forget that, and though Oxshott Heath is as sandy and well-drained as anywhere in England the whins hold the moisture very pertinaciously. So I had a better reason for making the remark than Mr. Eliot, who put the decision down to advancing years—"I grow old . . . I grow old . . ."—and laid himself open, in my view, to a charge of rhyme-snatching. Old men don't roll the bottoms of their trousers, except when gardening—as a few minutes on the steps of the Atheneum will prove.

However, my point is that I might just as well have said flatly "I am going to roll my trousers up"—and shall in fact do so if the circumstances recur. It is not much good being apt if one is simply to be suspected of being stilted. Look at the heading of this article. Nine out of ten will think I made it up. Well, I might have; it isn't right outside my range as some of the best bits of Longfellow are. But Robinson Jeffers wrote it, and, what is more, lifted it out of his verses and used it as a title, as I have done. You don't read Robinson Jeffers? Nor do his compatriots, as far as my experience goes. When I began an address last year to a Literary Society in the Middle West, mainly ladies who pursue

Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet it alone (there's another pearl wasted), by quoting the opening line of "Shine, Perishing Republic,"

While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to Empire,

there wasn't a nod of recognition in the house. One or two of the bigger women at the back even shouted "Shame," so I quoted the second line to try to clear up the misunderstanding:

And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass hardens.

But it did no good. I believe if I'd read them the whole poem they'd have gone home in a body, demanding the end of Marshall Aid. So I gave them a piece of my mind. "You do not seem to realize," I said, "that beauty is a liability rather than an asset—that in view of the fact that spirit creates form we are justified in supposing that you must have brains." That tore it. You never saw such a darting of glances under lowered brows. The first two and a half lines of one of Marianne Moore's best-loved poems, and all a Literary Society can do is clasp its elbows and take offence. It makes things difficult for a lecturer. "For you," I went on desperately, giving them look for look, "a symbol of the unit, stiff and sharp—"

"I resent that," some old fool in a purple hat called out.

"—conscious of surpassing by dint of native superiority and liking for everything self-dependent, anything an . . ."

There was quite a pause, while I waited to let it sink in, and then their President, a statue of matriarchy if ever there was one, got up and said, pretty ominously, "Will the lecturer continue, please?"

"You mean read the next stanza?" I asked. But it was obvious from their expressions they hadn't even realized I had got to the end of Verse One.

There was a good deal of muttering, too, the scraping of chairs and cries of "Money back." I made one more effort to keep the tone literary. "Thewed of the levin," I shouted, "thunder-shod and lean"—but it was useless. They didn't even recognize Hart Crane!

I make no serious complaint, nor have I any wish to give myself airs. Only, if people aren't going to take the trouble, here or in their own country, to read the American poets, I for one am not going to trouble to quote them.

H. F. ELLIS

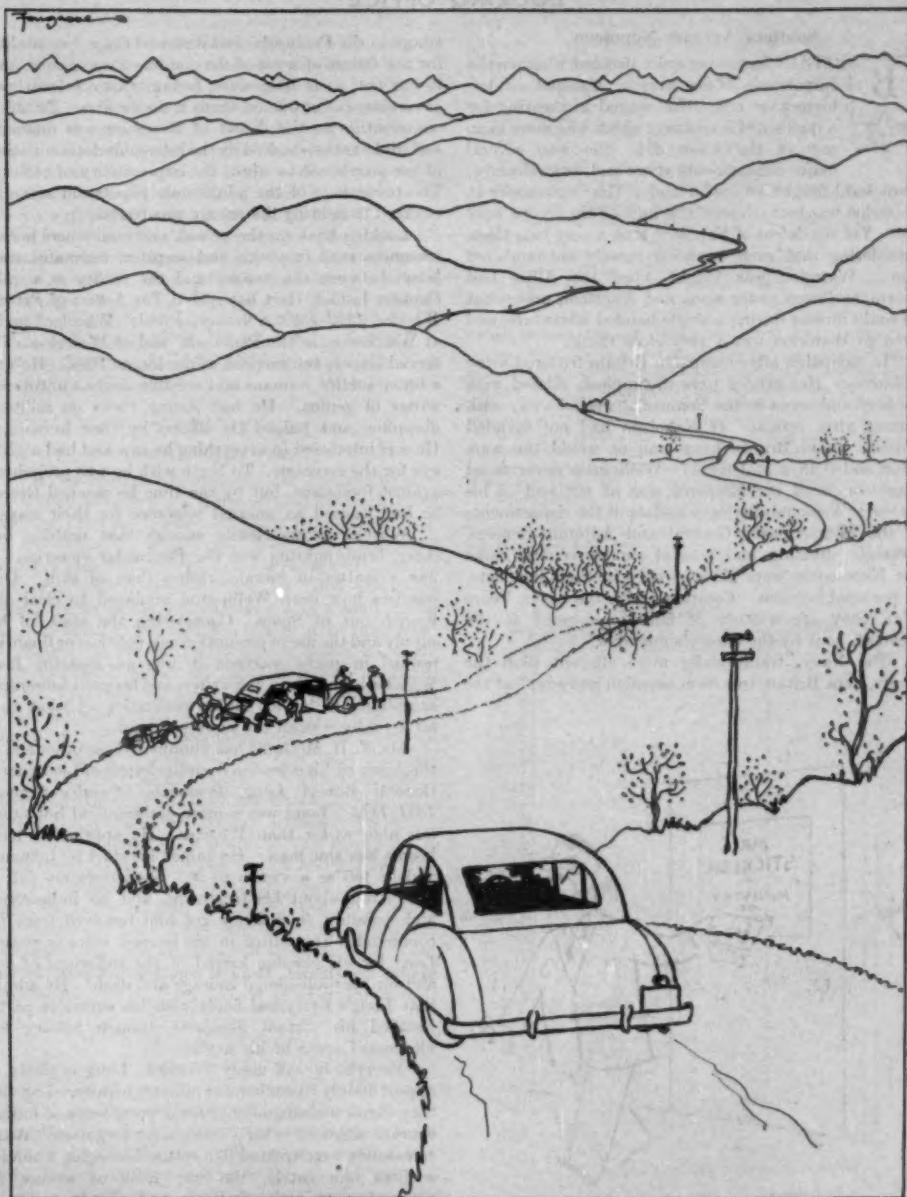
 &

Determined Opposition



"My dear chap, you couldn't ride a bicycle in anything else."

"REGAL	VICTORIA
Open 1 P.M. Last House 6.40	Open 12.50. Last House 7.0
Googie Withers	Rox Harrison
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Robert Preston	Ronald Howard
Elizabeth Sellers	Barbara White
CLOUDBURST	WHILE THE SUN SHINES (A)"
	Adjacent ads. in Cambridge Daily News



"Hadn't we better stop and ask if we can help? They seem to have plenty of people there already."

BOOKING OFFICE

Soldiers Against Napoleon

BRITAIN has never quite decided whether the Napoleonic Wars were a highspot of her history or not. She stayed in the ring for a quarter of a century, which was more than any of the Allies did. She won several major engagements at sea and, in a sideshow, many hard-fought battles on land. The Commander at Waterloo was hers, though the bulk of the troops were not. Yet the defeat of Napoleon took a very long time, considering that each Coalition greatly outnumbered him. Waterloo was fought when the Allies had enormous forces under arms and Napoleon only what he could muster during a single-handed adventure, and even so Waterloo was a very close thing.

In campaign after campaign Britain frittered away resources. Her armies were ill-supplied, riddled with jobbery and, even in the Peninsula, wasted away with retreat after retreat. If Napoleon had not invaded Russia, would Britain have won/or would the wars have ended in a stalemate? Wellington never faced Napoleon until the Emperor was at the end of his tether. Weak ministries, scandals in the departments of the Quartermaster-General and Adjutant-General, strategic shuffling and general amateurishness make the Napoleonic wars glorious only in their incidents, in personal heroism. Compared with the Seven Years War, they are a story of failure redeemed at the eleventh hour by the enemy's mistakes.

The Navy, traditionally more efficient than the Army, kept Britain free from invasion and supplied the

troops in the Peninsula; but it shared the responsibility for the failure of some of the combined operations, and it was not, as in later wars, facing other navies whose governments considered them a major arm. Britain's contribution to the defeat of Napoleon was financial and diplomatic—backed by the incredible determination of her people not to admit the impossibility of victory. The percentage of the adult male population actually engaged in fighting the enemy was trivial.

Looking back on the period, one remembers heroic romances read in youth and sceptical estimates read later; between the heroics and the reality is a gulf. Captain Liddell Hart has edited *The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809-1828*, a first-class find. Wheeler fought at Walcheren, in the Peninsula, and at Waterloo. He served later in the garrison of the Ionian Isles. He was a brave soldier, humane and sensible, and an untutored writer of genius. He had strong views on military discipline and judged his officers by their humanity. He was interested in everything he saw and had a good eye for the eccentric. To begin with he was prejudiced against foreigners, but by the time he reached Greece he had learned an amused tolerance for their ways.

Wheeler shows clearly enough that nothing but sheer, brute fighting won the Peninsular victories. It was a matter of morale, rather than of skill. One wonders how even Wellington managed to clear the French out of Spain. Considering the state of his supply and the use of promotion as a political or financial reward in party warfare, it was an amazing feat. Wheeler is an entrancing writer, and his good-humoured acceptance of his lot makes realization of what that lot actually was all the more poignant.

Mr. T. H. McGuffie has illuminated the other end of the Army by his selection from the letters of Lieutenant-General Robert Long, *Peninsular Cavalry General, 1811-1813*. Long was a more grammatical but much less able writer than Wheeler. He appears to have been a less able man. He gained his start by influence and he fell as a victim to it. His letters are full of complaints about his treatment, and his indiscretion and, possibly, inefficiency got him removed from his command. The editor in his learned memoir praises Long for his genuine hatred of the sufferings of war and for his professional courage and dash. He admits that Long's hysterical feuds with his superiors partly justified his virtual dismissal, though history has vindicated some of his actions.

Everybody will enjoy Wheeler; Long is likely to appeal mainly to students of military history. Together they throw a strange light on the persistence of human courage when all other virtues seem forgotten. Army commands were treated like rotten boroughs, wounded soldiers like cattle, the war itself as excuse for contractors to make fortunes and society to dance in celebration of victories. The Army was almost the last national institution to undergo reform, and it was not until it did that it met and overthrew an enemy in head-on collision.

R. G. G. PRICE



"Having me on the carpet when
he isn't even entitled to one!"

Runcible Thurber

Mr. James Thurber's fairy-story, *The 13 Clocks*, is inclined to trip itself up while mocking the ancient path that at other times it treads almost conventionally. Our need to make mental adjustments to the varying depth in his cheek of Mr. Thurber's tongue robe us of the simple zest with which we habitually approach a demon duke, his dazzling captive, and one of those timely young men of good blood with the knack, so utterly beyond our powers, of whisking girls out of castles against odds which no bookie would have to call twice. More familiar than funny is the Todol who looks like a blob of glup, and gleeps, and the pantomime rhyme in which some of the characters converse. When Mr. Thurber is himself, however, we cannot grumble; then the dark scene of villainy is lit by such flashes as the Duke's "We all have flaws, and mine is being wicked." Mr. Marc Simont's coloured illustrations hit this mood squarely.

E. O. D. K.

Conversation Piece

The "imaginary" Republic of Doria might be anywhere in the Mediterranean between the Palestinian coast and Capri; but one feature at least is familiar, the English expatriate, living on Trust funds, falling gilt-edged securities and memories of a vanished era of comfort, remains as unchangeable as Peter Pan. How essentially pathetic he seems against a modern background can be seen in *Tillotson*, for, intentionally or unintentionally, Mr. Philip Trower has portrayed a world in which emptiness and boredom are the only fruits. As usual, in a small community, social life revolves round a clash of personalities dominated (back stage) by Tillotson, the wealthy art critic, the uncrowned king of Dorian cocktail parties. There is the frustrated Duchess Carioli who gets social esteem by being Tillotson's mistress in name and who finds solace with her chauffeur; there is the pathetic Mr. Jansen, a wealthy nonentity who wishes to lionize the art critic; Uther Pendragon, a Bloomsbury weed gone to seed; and Helen Carroway who falls in love with the romantic young hero of the book, Sir Jacob d'Albey. Out of these bitter-sweet ingredients Mr. Trower has fashioned a cocktail of his own which, on first taste, seems harmless, but, when finished, is discovered to contain a dash of deadly nightshade.

R. K.

Annals of the Poor

Broken arc or perfect round—is the short story to be a fragment of "real life" or a creation, is the author to be Peeping Tom or God Almighty? The discriminative skill of Miss Mary Lavin's new series of Irish tales emphasizes this dilemma. She inclines to the first school herself but bestows critical attention on the second. "A Story with a Pattern" is ingeniously attributed to one of her readers, who, dissatisfied with her attitude, tells her a tragic and shapely tale of nemesis in a humble marriage to prove that there are "judgments" even in this life. *A Single Lady and Other*

Stories deals almost exclusively with lower-middle-class Irish society—not an exhilarating milieu. "The Small Bequest" very shrewdly portrays the fate of a companion in aristocratic circles; but the aristocrats exist to set off the companion. "A Woman Friend" relates the decline of a young doctor into the temporary solace of a professionally crippling marriage. H. P. B.

Books Reviewed Above

The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1800-1828. Edited by Liddell Hart. (Michael Joseph, 18/-)
Peninsular Cavalry General, 1811-1813. Edited by T. H. McGuffie. (Harrap, 15/-)

The 13 Clocks. James Thurber. (Hamish Hamilton, 9/6)
Tillotson. Philip Trower. (Collins, 10/6)
A Single Lady and Other Stories. Mary Lavin. (Michael Joseph, 10/6)

Other Recommended Books

The "Caine" Mutiny. Herman Wouk. (Cape, 15/-) Very long novel about the troubles on a U.S.N. destroyer-minesweeper in the Pacific in 1943-1944, and the court-martial that followed. Exceedingly well done, amusing, ironio, intelligent, fair, and quite intensely gripping as a story.

Written by Hand. Aubrey West. (Allen and Unwin, 7/6) An introduction to the fashionable art of improving the handwriting, with many examples of fine calligraphy old and new. Not a text-book, but a strong incentive to obtain one.

Begin, Murderer! Desmond Cory. (Muller, 10/6) Slick, ingenious whodunit making the Brighton area resemble California even to giving the corpse's weight in pounds. Mayhem, metaphor and minxes.



"I thought I told you to play on the Bunter Sandstone and keep away from the Keuper Marl."



CHRISTMAS BOOKS

for older children

Children's novelists (yes, nowadays their books are called "novels") incline to cater for the type of reader who has ponies, boats and parents able to afford expensive holidays. The girls' school story (no great loss) seems to be dead. Adventures become wilder and more impossible, just as the child in fiction is strangely sensible, very dull and more and more like its elders. There are (though not exactly exceptions to this modern rule) a few books so well done that possibilities and probabilities do not matter. Adrian Seligman's *Thunder in the Bay* (Hodder and Stoughton, 9/6) is one of them. Here the children who man the 42-foot yawl are human beings, and not just the pegs on which to hang a story. Seamanship is taken seriously, the story is exciting, the writing excellent, and there's a strong breath of un-film-like romance. But the most romantic story of the year (again the word is used in its undefinable and magic sense) is *Wild Sea Goose* (Murray, 7/6), by Rosemary Tonks. Here the author takes the legend of the barnacle goose, and makes it live in a seaside village. The locals are afraid, the children (real ones this time) are partisans of the geese, and there is much excitement. Here's a book to stimulate imagination and to make one wonder if things that never were may be true indeed. H. M. Tomlinson's *The Haunted Forest*

(Hodder and Stoughton, 6/-) is announced as a children's story. In it the two young children of a Malayan hunter go to search for their parents in the jungle, and are found by them. The happy ending should be stressed by anyone who gives the book to an even possibly nervous child, for here is a study of terror. Nothing could be more beautiful or more terrifying than this tale of a brave little boy's conquest of his own fear. By comparison *Quokka Island* (Collins, 5/-), by Leslie Rees, is soothing syrup, though it has fears and horrors and tenseness. It is intensely exciting, quite well written and more for boys than for girls. *Stolen Summer* (Collins, 8/6), by Anne Barrett, is much more for girls, and has something of the strange enchantment of the well-beloved "Secret Garden" and the same humour and tenderness as well. Its author should be noted because she may have much more to give us. She breaks away from the well-preserved child, and tells about a little girl whose mother turned house-keeper because of the new way of the world. It is a great relief to find an occasional work-a-day child in a working life, and *Gipsey's Great Adventure* (Hodder and Stoughton, 7/6), by Victor Becker, breaks new ground. Gipsey (a boy—and named for his black hair) sells newspapers, and because he wants to make more money applies for a film job. After that the story (alas!) becomes just a little silly, but there's one grand and gratifying moment when Gipsey slaps the face of a film starlet. *The Legend of Northgate Farm* (Routledge, 8/6) is a sensible book about two boys who discover hidden church plate on their father's farmland. The author, E. G. Butchart, has taken pains to make his history authentic and to avoid making the discovery too easy. There's treasure of quite another sort (scientific and medical) in Mary Dunn's excellently told *Mountain Mystery* (Lutterworth Press, 8/6), which is about children who holiday in the Welsh mountains and deal, very loyally, with a problem. Here again, and we give thanks for the relief, all the characters are human beings, and some are amusing as well. There are two good historical books; *Jackin the Jester* (Chatto and Windus, 9/6), by Ursula Moray Williams, tells of a grave little Court jester and a turbulent daughter of the house; the other—*Susanna Campaigne* (Blackie, 6/6), by Marjorie Phillips—is a story of Marlborough's days, and a boy ensign, and the spoilt girl pet of a curious household. A book that has a fair chance of delighting all ages is *"Jan"* (Hutchinson, 8/6). This story of a Dutch barge dog is delightfully written, and even more delightfully illustrated, by G. W. Barrington. It's very simple, rings true, and is a small gem of a story.

B. E. BOWER



"What is it a sign of when a cow is lying down with its four feet up in the air?"

WHY PICK ON US?

I WAS turning, somewhat idly, the pages of one of those scientific popularizers which began as a trickle with H. G. Wells and have since developed into a flood, when I came upon the following passage, which I submit for serious consideration as among the most thought-provoking ever written:

"The astonishing thing about the discovery of steam power was that it should have been so long delayed. Calling as it did for only the most elementary powers of observation, there seems no reason why the discovery, *with all that flowed from it*, should not as easily have come in the eighth century as in the eighteenth . . ."

Put like that it's unanswerable. It really is, if you think about it, not merely astonishing but inexcusable that we should have been kept waiting so long for such a trumpery piece of invention as this. Where was the difficulty? What was hard about it? What were previous generations doing, with all those millions of saucepan-lids bobbing up and down all through the long centuries, not to have seen something so manifestly (and, in the case of housewives in particular, so literally) under their noses? How did Archimedes come to miss it? What excuse has Leonardo? Why, the thing hardly deserves to rate as a discovery at all. I honestly believe I could have thought of it myself, a thing I rarely feel about the law of gravitation, for example, or the differential calculus.

The extent of the wrong which we of the twentieth century have suffered from this selfish idleness on the part of the first seventeen or so (I do not press the case against the pre-Christian era) is apparent when one considers the words I have italicized in the above quotation. For if steam power had been discovered even as late as the eighth century — which, heaven knows, would have been hurrying no one — it means that men would have pretty well completed the industrial revolution by the end of the ninth, and got around to the atomic age and the first floodlit football by



"There won't be any fuss about parking it there, will there?"

the tenth or the eleventh. No one can pretend that that would have been very pleasant for them, particularly during the last lap, but afterwards (if there were any afterwards) succeeding generations—including our own—would have been in clover. All the experts are agreed that the distinctive feature of an atomic era is its hit or miss character. Provided we can sidestep the danger of universal extinction, we simply can't fail, we are assured, to enter upon an age of quite unexampled prosperity and well-being. The snag is in the "provided," of course, and that, as I've just shown, ought to have

been William the Conqueror's headache rather than ours. When one reflects that with any luck at all we should now have been living in a golden age extending back through several centuries (our history lessons beginning, very possibly, with little tots chanting under their teacher's instruction "Universal Plenty, 1066") one cannot but feel a certain bitterness towards all the mute, inglorious Watts of the first millennium and a half.

Such reflections lead on to an even darker suspicion. Is it not possible that the potentialities of steam were perfectly well known to the keenest minds of the past, and

that all the ingenuity of statesmanship was directed towards the suppression of the idea rather than its exploitation? One can imagine the discovery occurring again and again, in different places and times, like outbreaks of plague, and authority hastening to put a cordon sanitaire round the inventor until he could be brought to see, by a portrayal of the dire consequences that must otherwise follow, the necessity for silence. Viewed in this light, human history must have consisted of a series of narrow escapes, with, of course, ultimate disclosure inevitable. Sooner or later it had to happen that someone—Watt, as it proved, and subject to anything that Mr. Stalin claims to the contrary—should not only make his baleful discovery but should make it known to too wide a circle for suppression to be any longer possible.

The mischief was done. Conception had occurred, and the incubation period has been just long enough to hand us the baby.

SQUARING THE CRUMPTET

"The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square."

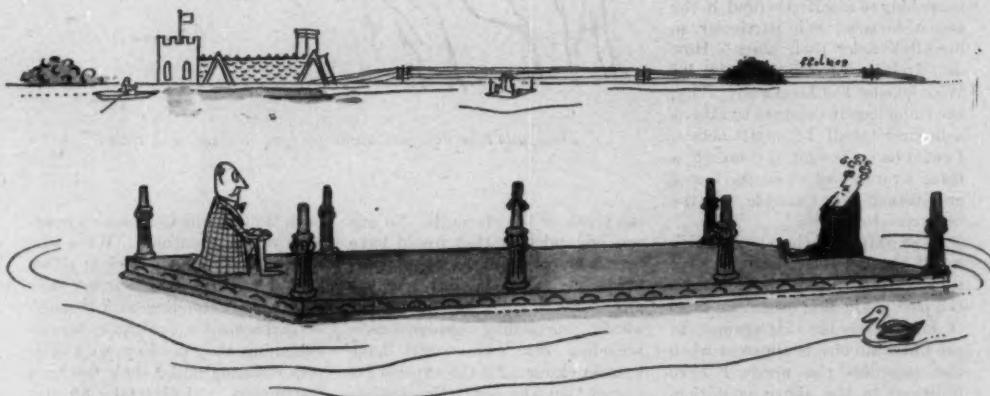
Tennyson, *The Princess*

AS the bard of the 'twenties observantly sings,
The banana is bent in the nature of things,
So much so, a straight one will never be found.
In the same way, the crumptet is round.

Would you think, then, some vandal (oh, scandal!) would
dare

To design, bake and market a crumptet that's square,
Right-angled, new-fangled, all corners and lines,
Hard-grain'd as the Muse of co-tangents and sines?
The notion's repugnant, repulsive, unsound,
For, *v. supra*, the crumptet's essentially round.

They defend it no doubt with superior guff
About fitness for use and such functional stuff,
About optimum toastage, and swinging of cats,
With a glance at gas-grillers and bachelor flats—
They'll be breeding pigs next with tetragonal legs,
And teaching the hens to lay building-block eggs.
Square saucepans we've swallowed, and teapots like cubes,
We've furnished with nightmares of rhomboids and tubes:
But *this* must be stopped, like the flight from the pound,
For the crumptet—let trumpets defiant resound—
The crumptet's essentially, undifferentiably, fully, potentially
and existentially round.



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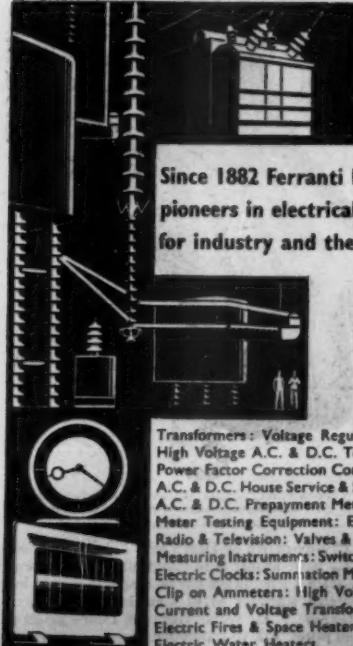
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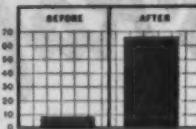
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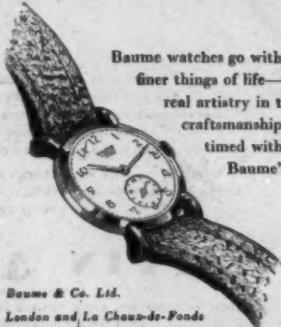
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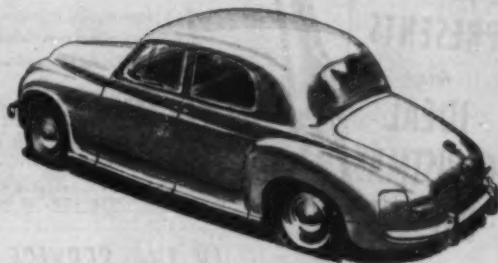
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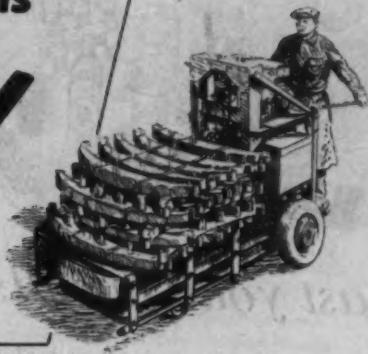


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fruits. Globe of stem ginger. Tin of
marrons glacés. Chocolate biscuits.
Dates. Globe of apricots in syrup.
Crackers. 100 cigarettes. And a bottle
each of port, sherry, brandy and
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Boned chicken, bottled in aspic. 2 lb.
Xmas pudding. 2 lb. Dundee cake. Box
glacé fruits. Dates. Crackers. Port,
sherry. 50 cigarettes

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stem ginger. Box glacé fruits. Dates.
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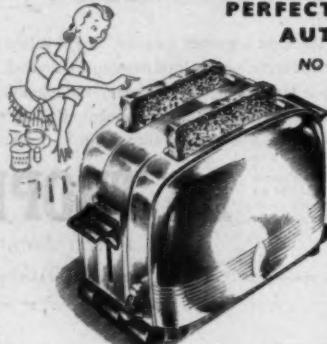
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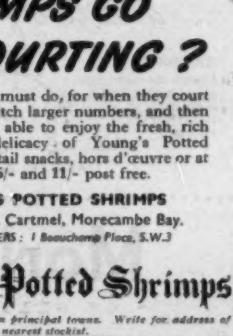
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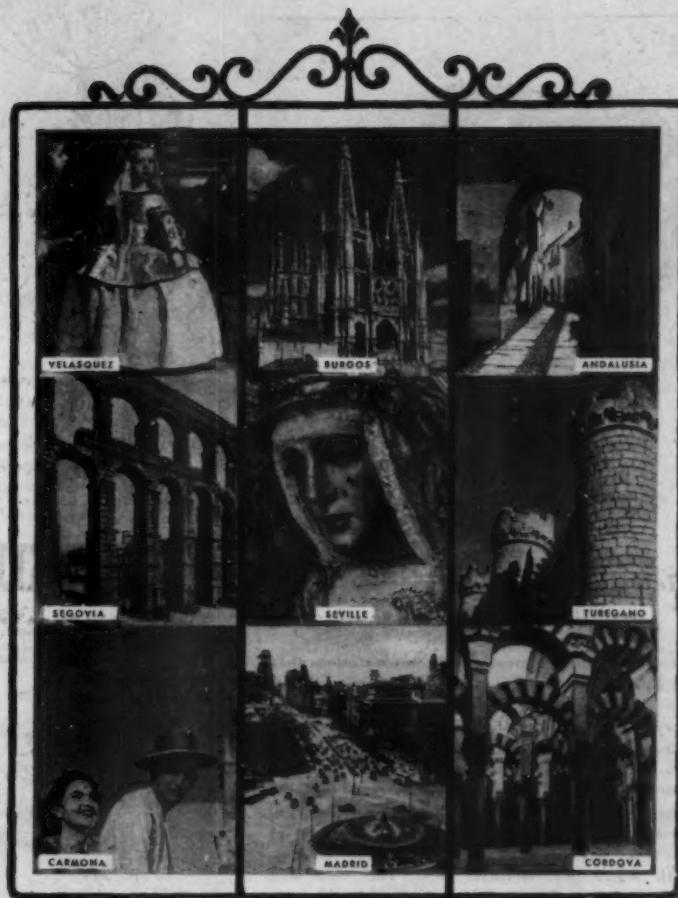


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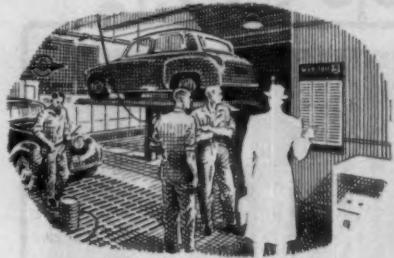
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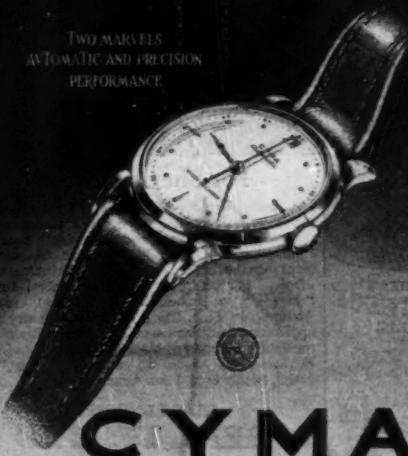
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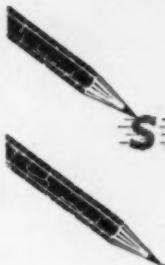
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